

**LIVE THE VISION, SHARE THE DREAM:  
NEW HYMNS FOR AN OLDLINE FAITH**

**A Professional Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The School of Theology at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry**

**by  
Norman Richard Broadbent  
May 1994**

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**Norman Richard Broadbent**

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*This professional project, completed by*

Norman Richard Broadbent,  
has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty  
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**LIVE THE VISION, SHARE THE DREAM:**

**NEW HYMNS FOR AN OLDLINE FAITH**

**by**

**Norman Richard Broadbent**

In the Reformed Protestant tradition of worship, hymns have long represented a part of the liturgy that is shared equally by all. Through familiarity of tune and text, hymns have become a comfort and a tradition to generations of worshipers. In addition, hymn texts (whether drawn from a paraphrase of scripture or the creative urging of the poet) represent the doing of theology by the singing congregation.

Because of the primacy of hymn singing, it is often the most jealously possessed tradition of the congregation. As a result, any substantive change in familiar hymns, be it textual or musical, frequently results in resistance and alienation.

Hymns are also a product of the culture in which they are produced. Whether drawn from the Reformation of Martin Luther, the post-Puritan era of Isaac Watts, the Wesleyan renewal period, the revival decades of Moody/Sankey, or the more recent post-Vatican II era, Christian hymnody has been produced in response to a particular contemporary need and faith.

This project seeks to place into context the creative principles which have prompted hymn writers to produce the new hymns of their respective eras. By so doing, and in examining as case studies the works of Luther, Watts, the Wesleys, and Ira D. Sankey, we can begin to appreciate the historic role of introducing new hymns to our faith.

The evangelical component is explored in light of the numerical decline in oldline churches, while non-traditional and fundamentalist churches experience significant numerical growth.

Contemporary Christian music is a primary feature of these latter churches. This project explores how oldline churches might learn to be more at ease with today's contemporary changes in music, how an unchurched population responds to such music, and why this is simply the latest progression to a very old process.

Chapter 2 examines the eras and the influences thereof upon Luther, Watts, the Wesleys, and Sankey. Chapter 3 explores the influences of contemporary culture upon today's church, its theology and hymnody. Chapter 4 draws upon personal observations gained from a sabbatical spent among non-traditional churches and their music. Chapter 5 offers resources and guides as to how the oldline church can contemporize its hymn singing, and to revitalize the congregation's evangelical witness.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is fitting that I have this space in which to acknowledge a number of persons who have been extraordinarily helpful in their encouragement and support of this project. Such acknowledgment must begin with the people of the United Church of Christ of La Mesa, CA., who enthusiastically supported my decision to begin this effort, and have rejoiced in its fulfillment. The numerous people within the Southern California Conference of the United Church of Christ who participated in workshops derived from my study must also be acknowledged, as they helped me refine and test assumptions relevant to my thesis.

To Rev. Lincoln Wirt, Dr. Davie Napier and Joy Napier of Pilgrim Place, along with the other Pilgrims who provided feedback and resources in my effort to broaden the scope of this work, I owe a deep gratitude. Without the guiding questions, intellectual integrity and enthusiasm of Dr. Jack Coogan, I would not have been able to have kept as clear a focus on my work as I have been able.

A lasting acknowledgment to my wife, Jan, and to my parents, whose insistence that I persevere has brought this effort to its conclusion.

Finally, I thank the members of my newest family, Falcon Heights United Church of Christ, St. Paul, MN, for creating an environment in which I could begin my new work with them while completing the old work I brought with me.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. Sing Praise to God . . . . .	1
Problem Addressed by the Project . . . . .	1
Importance of the Problem . . . . .	1
Thesis . . . . .	5
Definition of Terms . . . . .	5
Work Previously Done in the Field . . . . .	11
Formation of a Sung Theology. . . . .	17
Historical Sociology of Religious Language. . . . .	26
Scope and Limitations of the Project . . . . .	29
Procedure for Integration . . . . .	29
Chapter Outline . . . . .	29
2. I Love to Tell the Story . . . . .	31
Martin Luther . . . . .	31
The Hymn Text . . . . .	32
The Musical Form . . . . .	35
Issac Watts . . . . .	38
The Hymn Text . . . . .	42
The Musical Form . . . . .	48
Impact on American Hymns . . . . .	50
John and Charles Wesley . . . . .	52
The Hymn Text . . . . .	54
The Musical Form . . . . .	59
Impact on American Hymns . . . . .	61
Ira D. Sankey . . . . .	64
Beginnings of the American Gospel Hymn . . . . .	65
The Song Master . . . . .	68
Gospel Lyrics . . . . .	70
The Gospel Hymn as Music . . . . .	77
3. Live the Vision, Share the Dream . . . . .	81
Contemporary Foundations . . . . .	81
Cultural Environment . . . . .	85
The Church and Popular Culture . . . . .	91
Classical, Popular, and Contemporary Christian Music . . . . .	96

4.	God Makes All Things New .....	105
	Church Data .....	105
	Praise Worship .....	106
	Praxiological Extentions .....	113
	Oldline Challenge .....	118
	Sing Praise, Sing Free, Sing for Joy .....	120
	Issues at Stake .....	123
5.	Here is Our Mission .....	126
	Creativity and Communication .....	126
	New Lyric - Old Tunes .....	128
	New Hymns - New Tunes .....	140
	Non-Traditional Contemporary Christian Hymns .....	149
	MIDI Music .....	154
	CCLI .....	156
	Using New Hymns in Oldline Churches .....	158
	Concluding Summary .....	160

#### Appendixes

A.	The Hymns of Martin Luther .....	162
B.	Characteristics of the Wesleyan Hymn Form and Content .....	169
C.	Lowell Mason's Philosophy of Church Music .....	171
D.	The Ninety and Nine .....	173
E.	Welcome! Wanderer, Welcome! .....	174
F.	There'll be no Dark Valley .....	175
G.	Scatter Seeds of Kindness .....	176
H.	Sing Praise! See Free! Sing for Joy! .....	177
I.	God Makes All Things New .....	178
J.	Sing Alleluia to the Lord! .....	179
K.	Live the Vision, Share the Dream .....	180
L.	Tallis' Canon .....	181

M.	Duke Street .....	181
N.	Ocean is a Call to Worship .....	182
O.	Come, Sing of Greening, Graceful Life .....	184
P.	Too Splendid for Speech .....	186
Q.	Seek Not in Distant, Ancient Hills .....	188
R.	There's a Quiet Understanding .....	190
S.	Come into His Presence .....	191
T.	Single Sequencing System .....	192
U.	60 Ways of Using Hymns .....	193
	Bibliography .....	198

## CHAPTER 1

### Sing Praise to God

#### Problem Addressed By the Project

The problem addressed in this project is one of re-interpreting for today's oldline churches how congregational singing of hymns critically shapes and forms the theology and witness of the Christian church in its present and future life.

#### Importance of the Problem

In the Reformed Protestant patterns of worship, hymns have traditionally represented the one part of the liturgy that is shared equally by ordained and non-ordained. In the introduction of the United Church of Christ's Book of Worship, Joseph Gelineau is quoted as saying, "The Christian liturgy was born singing and has never ceased to sing."<sup>1</sup> From both the familiarity of tune and text, hymns have become a comfort and a tradition. That is part of the dialectic problem, as what is deemed comforting and traditional may not always best serve the theological and evangelical demands of the Christian faith.

Because of the primacy of hymn singing, it is frequently the most jealously guarded activity of a congregation. This appears to be especially true among those churches with strong denominational traditions. The recent activity among several Protestant bodies to rework their hymnals has produced untold hours of debate and consternation over which hymns to include, change, add or delete. In a January 6, 1990 article in the Los Angeles Times, George Cornell of the Associated Press reported that the 18 member hymnbook revision committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) had five months earlier

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Gelineau, introduction to Book of Worship (New York: UCC, Office of Church Life and Leadership, 1986), 16.



disclosed a potential 600 hymns for inclusion in that denomination's new hymnal. Soliciting comments on the selection process, the committee received about 350 letters, of which 250 were complaints.<sup>2</sup>

As this report implies, any substantive change in familiar hymns (as in changing from gender exclusive to inclusive terms, or in dropping hymns with martial imagery) more often than not prompts resistance and resentment from church members.

When the Ecumenical Women's Center of Chicago produced a volume in 1974 which "corrected" heavily masculine nouns and pronouns, the reception among seminary faculty and students was a warm one. But among established church musicians such as Austin Lovelace came warnings of the dangers of tinkering with old hymns.

If the theology is wrong, then drop the  
hymn- don't try to re-write.... If the old  
isn't valid, omit it and write something  
new and better.<sup>3</sup>

A complaint I hold with Lovelace's view (and one which will be later illumined) is an assumption that to alter hymn texts is tantamount to destroying the contextual integrity of the original hymn writer. In fact, revision has always been the first step taken by any writer who has eventually brought a new and fresh vision to the worshipping community. Our hymnbooks are filled with texts that are revisions of original works, most notably the Psalms.

Lovelace's option of writing entirely new texts and tunes is entirely appropriate to the musical task of the late twentieth century church. But we find ourselves confronting some unique challenges as we contemplate this responsibility. One school of thought holds that hymns should be

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<sup>2</sup> George Cornell, "Compilers of Hymnbooks Encountering Sour Notes," Los Angeles Times, 6 Jan. 1990: F14.

<sup>3</sup> Austin Lovelace, "The Case Against Tinkering," Reformed Liturgy and Music 21 (Summer 1987): 162.

essentially praise songs, built upon the traditional psalm texts, but employing a musical form that is compatible to modern musical styles and tastes. A second school of thought holds to the view that hymns should "say something," should teach the faith, challenge the conscience and spirit, and reflect the mission of the church. This leaves us with the foundational question as to the place a hymn fills as part of a worship liturgy. S. T. Kimbrough, writing for Theology Today asserts:

[Hymns] of the church ARE theology. They are theological statements: the church's lyrical, theological commentaries on Scripture, liturgy, faith, actions, and hosts of other subjects which call the reader and singer to faith, life, and Christian practice.<sup>4</sup>

What remains to be answered is whether the theology is good or bad, insightful or sentimental, revelatory or congratulatory!

Even the most beloved of hymns was once new to some congregation when first sung. As Chapter 2 will detail, part of the rich tradition of the oldline church is to have been a constant well of new hymns spawned by the creative energies of musicians and poets seeking to make relevant the Christian faith so as to impact future generations of believers. A part of that richness in hymnwriting has been that the very newness of a text and tune prompts reflection on the part of the congregation in such a way that it is moved beyond the familiar and comfortable. Rather than replacing the traditional hymns, the new hymn adds to the reservoir of theological understanding and appreciation, to the liturgical movement and moment. Both the familiar and the new are integral parts of the worship experience.

Any hymn (including occasional music) expands the metaphors in which there is a movement between God as audience, and congregation as prompters of worship; or, congregation as audience and God as prompter. I contend that this is a kind of poetic dance that takes place, liturgically, when the power of the Spirit is set forth in congregational music.

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<sup>4</sup> S. T. Kimbrough, "Hymns Are Theology," Theology Today 42, no. 1 (April 1985): 59

It is Brian Wren's contention that good hymns are a poetic unit, and that when literally seen or heard as such, these "poems of faith contribute much more to worship than just singing."<sup>5</sup> The idea he puts forth is that it is in poetry that we are given the wonderful word images to convey and carry the equally wonderful mystery of God-with-us.

However, beyond wonderful there must always be a certain preciseness to what it is we say about God, born not only of the ever-fresh context of human experience and understanding, but of what the whole of creation is revealing. This biocentric spirituality, for instance, values the celebration of life on the earth, has a sensual regard for earth, recognizes the earth as part of God's own body, and honors the "web of life" notion which is just now beginning to discover its metaphors in hymns.

Part of the reinterpretation process for the oldline church is to make these kinds of distinctions accessible to church musicians and church pastors. Just as exegetical skills are essential to effective preaching, similar ones are necessary in order to allow the hymns we sing speak for themselves.

Finally, hymnody becomes problematic for the oldline churches of North America; problematic because the modern world has usurped our faith language. Secular educational institutions and business corporations each have a defined mission statement. Secular politics is so infused with civil religion that the political order talks unashamedly about "saving the soul" of a nation, without regard to the deeper theological implications. Forgiveness and absolution are now the domain of pop psychology and television talk shows. Wal-Mart and Target customers are welcomed at the front door by a greeter, who ushers the customer to an appropriate pew (aisle). All this has created an environment in which the

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<sup>5</sup> Brian Wren, "Hymnody as Theological Empowerment," Chicago Theological Seminary Register 76, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 18.

church, to be relevant, has had to practice what Leonard Sweet says is "a language drawn from the very worlds of psychology and business."<sup>6</sup>

### Thesis

My thesis is that new hymns for an oldline faith will assist us in recovering our witness to the world, and will help us be effective in our evangelical responsibilities when we combine contemporary theological language and images in our texts with contemporary musical forms.

### Definitions of Terms

**Hymn** - This is a song of faith sung by a group of people. Brian Wren makes a distinction between a hymn and a song in that the hymn is:

(a) a corporate song of faith, usually in strophic form; (b) ideally, it unifies the singers, not merely in fellowship but in faith; (c) expresses our faith by speaking TO or OF the living God, written and sung FROM who and what and where we are, which will include both personal and mystical experience, and our social and political experience, and our social and political location.<sup>7</sup>

Paul Westermeyer groups as hymns a body of works which would include "carols, German Leisen, Latin sequence hymns, Southern white spirituals, black spirituals, etc."<sup>8</sup> Beyond that, Westermeyer writes,

Hymns are poems, they have a long history, and they come in many languages and forms: simple or complex, regular or irregular in metrical scheme, rhymed or unrhymed, rugged or smooth.

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<sup>6</sup> Leonard Sweet, "Can a Mainstream Change Its Course?" Liberal Protestantism, eds. Robert S. Michaelsen and Wade Clark Roof (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1986), 238.

<sup>7</sup> Wren, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Westermeyer, "What is a Hymn?" Reformed Liturgy and Music 21 (Summer 1987): 135.

objective or subjective, short or long.<sup>9</sup>

Lionel Adey believes that what distinguishes a song from a hymn is the myth.

The hymn identifies those critical episodes  
of man's spiritual history from his Creation  
and Fall to his Redemption and Last Judgment.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most concise and encompassing definition of the hymn comes from Erik Routley.

[A] hymn is an opportunity for a congregation  
to declare its experience and to rejoice in  
Christian doctrine corporately. A hymn uses  
music in order to achieve this corporateness;  
but the words take a logical priority over the  
music.<sup>11</sup>

**Worship and Liturgy** - James F. White cautions that with the enormous variety of culture and mentality that has shaped Christian worship over the centuries, it is risky to attempt any comprehensive definition of these terms. That being said, White does venture to say:

Christian worship is the deliberate act of  
seeking to approach reality at its deepest  
level by becoming aware of God in and through  
Jesus Christ and by responding to this aware-  
ness.<sup>12</sup>

Another thoughtful approach to the meaning of worship draws upon the importance and impact of the symbolic dimension found within the act of worship. Don E. Saliers suggests:

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<sup>9</sup> Westermeyer, 135.

<sup>10</sup> Lionel Adey, Hymns and the Christian "Myth" (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Erik Routley, Hymns Today and Tomorrow (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 18.

<sup>12</sup> James F. White, New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 40.

[to] experience worship fully requires us to perceive Christ in the midst of daily life, our places of work, and in the parabolic gathering and scattering of the church. We have stewardship over the rooms of worship and the elements of symbol, gesture, movement, raiment, furnishings, and song which invite and enable God's word and our response. The shoddy, the pompous, the trivial, and the sentimentalized have little power to evoke the power of God to sanctify.... Worship is a school for learning how to refer all times and places and persons to God.<sup>13</sup>

Drawing from his Jewish roots, Jesus obviously was sustained by the three pillars of Jewish nurture which, in turn, shaped the worship of the early church. These pillars were the temple, the synagogue, and home.<sup>14</sup> Over time there was a fusing of the customs and traditions of these pillars, becoming incorporated into a worship pattern which represented a scripture service and a meal of bread and wine. Christian worship was thus born.

If worship is a corporate approach to the reality of God, then what of liturgy? Liturgy in English derives from a translation of the Greek leitourgia, which is itself a combination of two other Greek words: laos (meaning people and from which we get laity), and ergon (a unit of work, such as in erg).<sup>15</sup> Put together, these derivative words become "the people's work," or, "the work of the people."

Originally, leitourgia had nothing to do with religion or church or worship. It meant "the work that people do wherever they are."<sup>16</sup> In other words, in the shop, the market, the home, the classroom, the wheelbarrow, the plow, the lathe, or the bakery. It was slowly, over time, that this original Greek root for "work of the people" became re-shaped until it came to mean

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<sup>13</sup> Don E. Saliers, "Sanctifying Time, Place, and People: Rhythms of Worship and Spirituality," Weavings 5 (September/October 1987): 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> United Church of Christ, Book of Worship, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, Spirituality and Liberation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 87.

<sup>16</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, 87.

the work people do in a church, whether praying prayers, singing hymns, preaching sermons, distributing communion, receiving communion, or struggling to stay awake.<sup>17</sup>

At its best, liturgy signals that there is no separation between the work done outside the church and that inside the church. Worship is an acknowledgment of the worth-ship of God.<sup>18</sup> As part of that liturgical activity of praise and thanksgiving the hymn lives to give poetic voice and corporate assent to the work of being the people of God

**Praise Singing** - Praise Singing is one type or style of congregational singing within a form of worship called Praise Worship which found its birth in the twentieth-century charismatic renewal movement. Its roots lie especially deep within the nineteenth century gospel hymn, and its reliance upon a central chorus or refrain. Praise singing uses a lyric which—like earlier traditional hymns and gospel hymns— paraphrases scripture, usually from the Psalms, and is set to music which is comprised of simple melody, easy harmonization, and is mnemnotic. As most widely used today, this style of congregational singing draws upon contemporary pop music.

Musical characteristics include pop-style harmonies, rhythms, popular performance techniques, and pop-style instrumentation such as drums, piano, synthesizers, guitars, and sometimes winds.... An important cultural factor in the growth of praise singing has been the development of electronic technology. The extensive use of sound reinforcement systems and electronic instruments (such as organs, synthesizers, and amplified instruments) provides an enormous array of sounds and dynamic levels not previously available.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, 87.

<sup>18</sup> Westermeyer, 137.

<sup>19</sup> Paul W. Wohlgenuth, "Praise Singing," The Hymn 38, no. 1 (January 1987): 22.

Two further qualities to the character of praise singing are the absolute importance upon one person in the worship setting who guides the singing activity, called the Worship Leader, and particular physical gestures (such as clapping, shouting, and lifting of hands) which encourages the expression of the whole body in worship.<sup>20</sup>

**Oldline churches/faith** - The use of this term stems from the work of a cluster of theologians and historians to describe a particular group of American Protestant churches. Liberal Protestantism, edited by Robert S. Michaelsen and Wade Clark Roof, identifies as oldline denominations the Congregational (including today's United Church of Christ), Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches. They comprise a core of churches that were predominant during the colonial period of our history.<sup>21</sup> They each shared a primarily English origin, generating certain cultural traditions that shaped early American attitudes toward the role of religion in the public sector.

These same authors identify as a subset a moderate Protestant cluster of three additional denominations which share similar values and culture: Methodists, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Northern (or American) Baptists. Taken together, these six churches in America comprise what has in the past been labelled as liberal or mainline churches. Some historians also include parts of the Lutheran tradition as mainline. According to Michaelsen and Roof, these traditions have lost much of their earlier cultural sway, in the process becoming oldline. As they write, "Oldline may also suggest that what was once main has ceased to be."<sup>22</sup>

**Language** - When the evangelist John begins his gospel "In the beginning was the Word....," we have a summary in the concept of logos as to the essential role of language to represent and communicate

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<sup>20</sup> Wohlgemuth, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Robert S. Michaelsen and Wade Clark Roof, eds., introduction to Liberal Protestantism (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1986), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Michaelsen and Roof, 6.



faith. Language is a tool we have to create, stimulate, transmit, and celebrate what we know and have directly experienced of the relationship between God and God's creation.

Language is, as S. K. Langer makes note, part of the cycle of symbol-making which gives the human unique capability and power. The human being, unlike all other creatures

uses signs not only to indicate things, but also to represent them.... We use certain "signs" among ourselves that do not point to anything in our natural surroundings. Most of our words are not signs, in the sense of signals. They are used to talk about things, not to direct our eyes and ears and noses toward them. Instead of announcers of things, they are reminders.<sup>23</sup>

New experiences always demand a new language, replete with symbolic and metaphoric images which help us point only partly to what we mean to say about the fullness of God. That is the dilemma of language when used in the religious sphere. Lyrical poetry, compelling narrative, inspiring hymns, the biblical Word of God can not say all there is to say about our experience or apprehension of the Holy. Our words are reminders, making language not a finite tool in our hands, only an approximate one. Therefore, ours must be a language that approximates our best understanding, hope, and belief in the pursuit of all that is holy.

I like...using the full spectrum of biblical images of God- human, nonhuman, material, and non-material. If we use only material analogies (God as rock, water, and so forth) we are underemphasizing the transcendent nature of God; we need also such nonmaterial images of God as love, word, spirit, verb, or light. If we use only human images of god (male or female) then anthropomorphism can be overdone and chauvinistic abuse of the natural environment can result.... It is all too easy to divert ourselves away from worshipping God to worshipping one particular image of God, and that is idolatry.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> S. K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 30-31.

<sup>24</sup> Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, The Divine Feminine (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1983), 115-16.

### Work Previously Done in the Field

There is considerable supportive work which has been done over the years in relation to the study of church hymnody. Albert Edward Bailey, Louis Benson, Erik Routley, Paul Westermeyer, and Brian Wren are the principal contributors to this examination of worship and hymns. Benjamin Whorf's work in the area of linguistics will help identify the source of the power of human language. And, of course, the biblical texts themselves offer direction to consider the role of worship and hymns from the perspective of faith history.

The psalmist admonishes Israel to sing a new song to the Lord, thereby revealing the historical base upon which our Christian hymnody rests. The Hebrew Psalms represent a collection of such songs, revealing the full range of experience which Israel understood to be the collective sighs, yearnings, cries of despair and hope, sojourn, and wandering toward fulfillment as a people.

In the Old Testament, other songs than the Psalms are set forth which later become literary models for New Testament writers. The Song of Deborah (Judg. 5:14-18), the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10), the Song of Miriam (Exod. 15:21b) and the book of the Song of Solomon each represent the hymnic form.

In the New Testament, the Gospel of Luke is particularly rich in hymnic expression, with four notable examples: the Song of Mary (1:46-55), also called the Magnificat; the Song of Zacharias (1:68-79), also called the Benedictus; the song of the angels (2:14) liturgically referred to as the Gloria in Excelsis; and the Song of Simeon (2:29-32), known as the Nunc Dimmittis. Not only are these literary forms, but they form the early core to music in the Christian liturgy. In writing to the Ephesians (5:18-19), Paul encouraged the early church community to "speak to one another in psalms, hymns and songs; sing and make music from your heart to the Lord."

The Gospel writer Mark (14:26) implied that Jesus was familiar with the hymn, writing of the disciples singing a Passover hymn following the Last Supper. Morgan Simmons surmises that this collection of hymns from the Jewish Psalter likely came from the great "Hallel" (Ps. 113-118).<sup>25</sup>

Modern day proponents of the hymn style known as Praise Singing base their validation for this style upon principles gleaned from Old Testament sources. Paul Wohlgemuth in his examination of Praise Singing observes that

worship activities surrounding the Ark of the Covenant, especially after it was placed in the Tabernacle of David, has become the paradigm of worship that accounts for the current emphasis upon both vocal and physical expressions in Praise Worship. Within the tabernacle the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Holy of Holies- place of deep, spiritual, intimate communion and fellowship with God.... It was in the Presence of the Ark of the Covenant that praise was given day and night, that some of David's psalms were written, that loud singing and instrumental playing were heard, and that dancing was practiced.<sup>26</sup>

Wohlgemuth broadens his biblical foundations by using as a reference point the design of the Tabernacle of Moses as a synthesis for a biblical order of Praise and Worship. He notes that the Tabernacle had three distinctive areas: outer court, inner court, and Holy of Holies. Alluding to Ps. 100:4, Wohlgemuth distinguishes between thanksgiving, praise, and worship.

In the outer court thanksgiving is expressed for what God has done...in the past. Here acts of thanksgiving inspire physical acts such as clapping, playing of instruments, singing, shouting with gladness, and dancing

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<sup>25</sup> Morgan Simmons, "Hymnody: Reflections of our Faith," Reformed Liturgy and Music 21 (Summer 1987): 139.

<sup>26</sup> Wohlgemuth, 20.

before the Lord. In the inner court praise takes the worshipers a further step and begins to focus on what God means to them now. Praise expresses itself as a type of extravagant singing and "boastful praise."

The Hebrew word for praise used here is "tehillah." Tehillah means to sing halals...[from] the root word hal-leluia, [meaning] to make a show, to boast, to be clamorously foolish, to rave, to celebrate. Therefore, tehillah means to sing halals, to sing praises extravagantly, to celebrate with song.

[The] ideal for the believer is to come into the Holy of Holies in which true worship takes place. In an awesome sense of the Presence of God the worshiper will often bow, kneel, or lie prostrate in worship, for this expresses a very intimate relationship with God. At this point in the service the music often becomes solemn and quiet as compared with the previous vigorous, loud expressions of thanksgiving and praise. The desired goal of the worshiper is this entrance into the Presence of God in worship.<sup>27</sup>

If Praise Singing has its biblical justification, so, too, does the more traditional hymn form. The same Psalm 100 invites all to "make a joyful noise to the Lord, all you lands!" Who were the musicians who led prayer and praise in ancient Israel? And what role did the hymn play in shaping Israelite worship?

Eunice Blanchard Poethig many years ago researched this concern for an edition of Liturgy magazine and discovered four musical traditions that were significant strains within Israel's worshiping practices.

The first tradition is the solo psalmist who accompanied him- or herself- on the lyre. The second is the instrumental ensemble often used in processions. The third is the chorus of women playing hand drums and dancing. The fourth, finally, is the great

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<sup>27</sup> Wohlgemuth, 20-21.

temple tradition involving professional musicians, string orchestras, cymbals, trumpets, and the psalm repertoire.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence is ample as to the broad uses of music within the religious and worshipping life of Israel, and music played a role in helping Israel articulate its faith. Just as the Exodus tradition remains the defining moment in the history of Israel, the Exodus also became the defining moment in terms of the singing of the faith. For in Exodus 15 we read,

Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a hand drum in her hand; and all the women went out after her with hand drums and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for [the Lord] has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider [the Lord] has thrown into the sea."<sup>29</sup>

We know that early Christianity drew directly upon Jewish worship practices, including use of their hymns and songs. The continuing base line of congregational singing was the psalm. The structure of the psalm suggests the use of antiphonal singing, or use of a prompter/precentor. This would have proven especially practical for singing done within the confines of a large gathered assembly.

We have specific reference to the use of psalms in the early Christian church from the so-called "Apostolic Constitutions," an early document of unverified authorship:

Sing the psalms of David, and peruse diligently the Gospel.... If thou desirest something to sing, thou hast the psalms...Assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord's house.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Eunice Blanchard Poethig, "Prayer and Praise in Ancient Israel," *Liturgy* 9, no. 1 (Fall 1950): 35.

<sup>29</sup> Exod. 15:20-21

<sup>30</sup> E. E. Ryden, *The Story of Christian Hymnody* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Press, 1959), 4.

Practically speaking, the singing done in the post-Apostolic Church was simple, done in much the same manner as derived from Jewish worship: lines of a psalm recited within a narrow range of a few notes.

The first acknowledged embellishments, musically, are credited to Aurelius Ambrose, fourth century bishop of Milan. Not only did he introduce antiphonal congregational singing in Milan, but he wrote-- and inspired others to write-- hymns to combat the heretical songs of the Arians.<sup>31</sup> His enormous influence upon other hymn writers produced what came to be known as the Ambrosian cycle of hymns. These are characterized by hymns whose lyric follow a defined metrical pattern, each stanza consisting of four lines of eight syllables each, similar to what is today called long meter.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps the best-known example of an Ambrose hymn is "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright."

O splendor of God's glory bright,  
From eternal bringing light;  
Thou light of life, light's living spring,  
True day, all days. illumining.

Come, Holy Sun of heavenly love,  
Shower down Thy radiance from above,  
And to our inward hearts convey  
The Holy Spirit's cloudless ray.

O joyful be the passing day  
With thoughts as clear as morning's ray.  
With faith like noontide shining bright,  
Our souls unshadowed by the night.

O Lord, with each returning morn  
Thine image to our hearts is born;  
O may we ever clearly see  
Our Savior and our God in thee.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ryden, 18.

<sup>32</sup> Ryden, 18.

<sup>33</sup> See Pilgrim Hymnal (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1958), 39.

These earliest hymns were based primarily on the psalms which helped maintain the connection to early Jewish worship patterns. It is vitally important to recognize that one emergent characteristic of the early Christian hymn was its being born of theological controversy. The hymn stood forth to enable a congregation to sing what it was that body was to believe over and against the prevailing heresy of the age. The revising of hymn texts straight from psalms into credal texts had begun, along with creation of a diversity of music and texts.

With the unfolding of the Medieval Roman Church era, two simultaneous developments in regard to hymns and their singing began to unfold. First, the architectural dominance of the cathedral and basilica provided an interplay between magnificent stained glass windows and solid granite walls, creating a musicians' sound chamber that was ethereal and mystical.<sup>34</sup> But as early as 787 C.E. and the Second Council of Nicea, the following statement issued about visual arts also became the guideline for determining who was to sing the hymns.

The substance of religious scenes is not left to the initiative of the artists. It derives from the principles laid down by the Catholic Church and religious tradition. His [the artist's] art belongs to the painter; its organization and arrangement belong to the clergy.<sup>35</sup>

Hymns, such as were written by Ambrose during the fourth century for the purpose of congregational singing, were gradually taken over by the clergy and choirs, so that by the ninth century congregational singing by laity was rarely practiced until the time of the Reformation.

The second significant development of the Roman Church during the Medieval era impacting hymnody was the development of Scholasticism within European universities. From them emerged such significant writers as Thomas Aquinas, John Wycliffe, and John Huss.

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<sup>34</sup> Kenneth W. Osbeck, The Endless Song (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1987), 58.

<sup>35</sup> Osbeck, 59.

Ruth Ellis Messenger suggests that the single most important event in the history of medieval hymnody was the origin of the sequence, a new type of hymn.

The sequence sprang from the liturgy of the mass. A musical chanted interlude, called a gradual, was placed between the reading of the Gospel and the Epistle while the ceremony of carrying the service book, which contained the readings, from one side of the altar to the other was performed. The gradual closed with a singing of an alleluia often protracted and complicated in form. To the music of the alleluia words were now set. The recurring musical refrains made a structure to support poetical strophes.... Differing theories are complicated by the fact that the word sequence was applied both to music and the words.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the Middle Ages the forms and styles of the modern hymn were being clearly shaped by these influences, with the actual singing being done principally by choirs. Not until the Protestant Reformation did hymns assume a dramatic new place in the development of Christian worship. and those influences will be the focus of greater detail in the next chapter.

#### Formation of a Sung Theology

Language is critical to the shaping of a hymn as its lyric is the heart of the form itself. Language is the primary tool by which people convey thoughts, visions, fears, hopes, passions, hungers and joys. It is language which gives people a distinctive place in the world of communication. Even the least trained ear can hear linguistic nuances between a spoken French, German, Russian, Chinese, Swahili and English.

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<sup>36</sup> Ruth Ellis Messenger, "Latin Hymns of the Middle Ages," The Papers of the Hymn Society, 14 (New York: Hymn Society of America, 1948): 8.



Further, there is what might be called the language of particularity. A theologian uses a particular language within his or her community which is technically distinctive from the language which a computer analyst will use within the orb of his or her working community, which is different from that of a laboratory researcher seeking a cure for AIDS, which is distinctive from that of an automobile assembly line worker.

In his book The First Urban Christians, Wayne Meeks points to this very language of particularity as a key device in the formation of community. He writes of a "language of belonging," saying

[Not] just the shared content of beliefs but also shared forms by which the beliefs are expressed are important in promoting cohesiveness. Every close-knit group develops its own argot, and the use of that argot in speech among members knits them more closely still. In-group jargon employs a variety of linguistic strategies. Ordinary words may be used with special nuances; the term *ecclesia* itself, applied to the company of Christians whether gathered in a house, or comprising many such gatherings in a city or province or all Christians everywhere, is an example.... Very quickly, though, the Pauline Christians developed their own slogans and patterns of speech that distinguished them from other Jewish groups as well as the general environment.<sup>37</sup>

Our present day tensions over use of inclusive language is rooted in this issue of particularity, as gender-based slogans and images of God reflect a particular structure and framework in which hymnwriters have worked and crafted a poetry of faith.

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<sup>37</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 93.

There is a more fundamental issue that must be first addressed if we are to adequately define God-language. Linguistics is a discipline rich in understanding how language can shape our thoughts and expressions, and offers us all a means of understanding the symbolic structure of the language we use.

In his seminal work Language, Thought, and Reality, Benjamin Whorf established two primary hypotheses that bear on this project: (1) that all higher levels of thinking are dependent upon language; and (2) that the structure of the language a people habitually use influences the manner in which they understand their environment.<sup>38</sup>

Whorf contends that the sweep of language usage has a greater sum effect upon our understanding of things than any single word. He argues this is so because

the systematic, configurative nature of the higher mind, the "patternment" aspect of language always overrides and controls the "lexation" (Nama) or name-giving aspect. Hence, the meanings of specific words are less important than we fondly fancy. Sentences, not words, are the essence of speech, just as equations and functions, and not bare numbers, are the real meat of mathematics. We are all mistaken in our common belief that any "word" has an "exact" meaning."<sup>39</sup>

The significance of the Whorfian hypothesis upon the language of faith becomes apparent when trying to contend with God-language. The ancient Hebrews utilized a very sophisticated linguistics when they developed a lexation for God that read YHWH. God has no precise naming; it was the experience of God that was pointed to in the naming, yet nothing was wholly adequate. God was Holy Other, the One

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<sup>38</sup> Benjamin Whorf, foreword to Language, Thought, and Reality (Cambridge: Technology Press of MIT, 1956), vi.

<sup>39</sup> Whorf, 258.

Who Causes To Come Into Being. Thus, might we surmise that God took on a name born of God's activity, an activity validated by the community through its way of talking about, singing, celebrating, and sharing the myth through language both spoken, sung and written?

This latter point is elaborated upon by Charles McCoy in his book When Gods Change. In noting that long before we have language, we have meaning, McCoy wants us to understand that language as we learn it comes from a rich background of tradition.

And in learning [language], we are confirmed in a complex and tacit dimension of meaning that has already been communicated to us in tactile ways, in the patterns of convenantal valencies, and in a wholeness of experiencing. Language relies upon this background, and its interpretation of particulars depends upon this comprehensive meaning.... But the wholeness signifies more than aesthetic appreciation. It is also means historical awareness, covenantal commitment, and the horizons of human believing.<sup>40</sup>

The issues raised by the study of linguistics show that much of our language, whether in the space of the church or the space of the world, is both patriarchal and anthropocentric. Thus, for a Christian to speak of God has (until fairly recently) meant to use a language of masculinized deity who dominates, measure, controls, and rewards. Such divine self-sufficiency establishes and maintains itself as separateness from the creation, while favoring the human component within creation as the more blessed, more dominant over other species. Indeed, within the human realm itself, the male emerges as the more blessed, more dominant.

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<sup>40</sup> Charles S. McCoy, When Gods Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 100-01.

The following is an example of how dominant language works in hymnody.

These things shall be: a loftier race  
                   than e'er the world hath known shall rise  
 With flame of freedom in their souls,  
                   and light of knowledge in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong  
                   to spill no drop of blood but dare  
 All that may plant man's lordship firm  
                   one earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,  
                   In-armed shall live as comrades free;  
 In every heart and brain and throb  
                   the pulse of one fraternity;

There shall be no more sin, nor shame,  
                   though pain and passion may not die,  
 For man shall be at one with God  
                   in bonds of firm necessity.<sup>41</sup>

This hymn, particularly popular among British soldiers during World War I certainly reflects a yearning for peace and an absence of warfare. It also reflects Christianity's predisposition to think first and foremostly in masculinized frameworks, and without reference to any other relationship of the natural world other than that which "man" dominates.

We know that historical contexts and realities change. Cultural shifts occur which change previous realities into new and differing ones, all of which cause paradigmatic shifts in how we articulate our beliefs about God. Indeed, our very experience of God may change as we begin to live in the midst of several cultures simultaneously (pluralism). Language is not unaffected.

Christianity has become accustomed to existence  
 in two places, the space of the church and the  
 space of the world. We have become accustomed

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<sup>41</sup> John A. Symonds, "These Things Shall Be," Pilgrim Hymnal (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1958), 450.

to two languages alongside one another; the  
Christian language with its venerable patina of  
two thousand years and the language of reality  
impinging upon us.<sup>42</sup>

Within the modern context, we have seen the evolution of a feminist theology which takes to task the limitations of both Christian language and the language of the world. The language of limiting God and culture to masculine-dominated symbols and meanings has now given way to efforts in bridging the gender chasm of experience. The feminist critique employs a vital concept of dynamic relationship. If we perceive ourselves to be creatures, then we will utilize a language that speaks of our relationship to the One Who Creates. This is precisely that route Israel took in naming YHWH.

Relationship to God, however, is typically confined to those culturally descriptive relationships marked in human community. The feminist critique asserts a cultural bias toward a dominant masculine pattern of authoritarianism, yielding a language which filters all meaning through that particular reality. Under these conditions Virginia Ramey Mollenkott observes,

Nothing would seem more natural to [the biblical authors] than to honor God by exclusively masculine references. And nothing would seem more unnatural to them than to introduce the female and feminine into their descriptions of the divine. Yet, as we have seen, they did exactly that! Not very often, of course. But the miracle is that they every used ANY images of God as female at all.<sup>43</sup>

The point must be made again that, in fact, scripture does provide alternative images and metaphors which becomes a base line for any and all future work in hymnody. Language, then, is one tool

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<sup>42</sup> McCoy, 114.

<sup>43</sup> Mollenkott, 40.

we have to create, stimulate, transmit and celebrate what we know and have experienced of the relationship between God and God's people. New experiences demand a new language, and a more fulfilling language is required when our symbols and metaphors and similes all point in limiting ways to what we mean to say about the fullness of God.

In telling counterpoint, Catherine Keller takes the Whorfian hypothesis and reinterprets it in light of a feminist critique. Keller asserts that

the association in this epoch between separatism and masculinity is so tight that as long as God is imagined in mainly masculine metaphors, there is simply no chance for conversion to a fundamentally relational spirituality. And the reverse holds equally true: as long as divinity is externalized by the traditional perfections of self-sufficiency, omnipotence, impassionability, and immutability, "God" - even were she made in name and image a woman, an androgyne, or a neuter- will support the oppression of women.<sup>44</sup>

This becomes a critical connection between feminism and ecology, and becomes a meaningful moment for the Church to introduce a new language in its hymns. Such a language offers a God who is immanent within creation, sensing and feeling all of life that grows within and through the Creative Presence. Likewise, the formerly separated world itself now becomes immanent, part of an organic whole, or web of life. From this shift, our language can indicate that other living forms have worth, that animals do enhance the experience of God, that there is an ethical demand upon people of faith to not rob non-humans of the God-voice, their song.

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<sup>44</sup> Catherine Keller, From a Broken Web (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 38.

There is a language which emanates from non-human voices, non-human songs that express a sense of inclusion in the memory, love, and meaning of God. The gospel writer Matthew (6:28b-29) reports that Jesus himself once asked his disciples,

Consider the lilies of the field, how they  
grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet, I  
tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was  
not arrayed like one of these.

In a contemporary style, we hear an echo of an ancient language celebrating the cosmic wholeness:

In the days before when  
the song was flung out  
through the space of forever-  
Unleashed, as it were.  
in a fire of passion  
of naked rhythm.

The music fire-battered  
the rock of a planet  
young and primarily exposed.

Air softened,  
water-confronted.  
the fire leapt  
and was gone-  
the song lies struck  
in magic rock  
Waiting.  
Waiting.<sup>45</sup>

It may well be, as Cynthia Serjak suggests in her poetic New Story, that we have a common ancestry in the origin of all things. We share a common ground with plants, animals, trees, grasses.

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<sup>45</sup> Cynthia Serjak, foreword to Music and the Cosmic Dance (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1987), xiii. Used by permission.

gasses, rocks, and more. Where is that God-language going to be reflected in our liturgical celebrations if not in our hymnody?

Thomas Berry notes in The Dream of the Earth that it is our language which most clearly reflects our inability to hear voices (music) other than our own—a further dimension of Christianity existing simultaneously in two spheres.

Our traditional languages express most clearly this anthropocentrism from which our difficulties have emerged. Our imagination is filled with images that sustain the present direction of our culture. Our spiritual values are disorienting with their insistence on the flawed nature of the existing order of things and the need for relief by escape from the earth rather than a greater intimacy with the earth. Constantly we assert the value of the human over the merely resource values of the natural world.<sup>46</sup>

The Christian hymn has the potentiality of using such a new language to enrich through symbol and image, metaphor and poetry, a shift in our view of reality. Often controversial, this is a responsibility and a controversy familiar to the Christian hymn.

In his classic Christian Hymns Observed, Erik Routley said in a day before we paid much attention to a green theology,

I would myself insist that [hymns are] a kind of ecology- the study of living things living with each other: of people living with the church and with music and with poetry and with doctrine; primarily, of people and groups of people.... [But] hymns, we shall find, have flourished most vigorously on the far edges of the church: at what some might call

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Berry, The Dream of the Earth (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 210.



its growing points, and others its vulnerable or even heretical points.<sup>47</sup>

### **Historical Sociology of Religious Language**

The last word relating to the fashioning of a hymn lyric I leave to Sandra Sizer's observations about the historical sociology of religious language. Working with the gospel hymns of the nineteenth century, Sizer observes:

Historians of American religion often have tended to neglect the specificity of linguistic forms; they have described what they take to be the essential content of beliefs, but paid little attention to the linguistic forms in which those beliefs are expressed, the ways they are used (for example in ritual settings), and the specific situations of authors and audiences.<sup>48</sup>

To address this more completely, Sizer asserts that in determining what is distinctive about the rhetoric of the gospel hymn one must examine metaphor, theme and form. Metaphors in poetic form exist within a great many gospel hymns as elements in a group of contrasting sets, often sharply dualistic.

Although the structure of the hymn is unusually monotonous, the before-and-after pattern clearly exhibits an important feature of the gospel hymns: sets of polar values like light/darkness, strength/weakness, sweetness/bitterness, hope/fear, home/wandering, and so on.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Erik Routley, Christian Hymns Observed (Princeton: Prestige Publications, 1982), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Sandra Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 10.

<sup>49</sup> Sizer, 25.

One demonstration of contrasting sets in a hymn is Frances Havergal's "Light After Darkness," copyrighted in 1881 and published in Biglow and Main's Gospel Hymns No. 5.

Light after darkness, Gain after loss,  
Strength after weakness, Crown after Cross;  
Sweet after bitter, Hope after fears,  
Home after wandering, Praise after tears.

Sheaves after sowing, Sun after rain,  
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;  
Joy after sorrow, Calm after blast,  
Rest after weariness, Sweet rest at last.

Near after distant, Gleam after gloom,  
Love after loneliness, life after tomb.  
After long agony, Rapture of bliss,  
Right was the pathway, leading to this.<sup>50</sup>

The second aspect, theme, is answered by the question, "What is this hymn about?" Is it about pilgrimage, or mission, or the Lordship of Jesus? Sizer's study indicates that the theme has multiple possibilities, but ultimately relates directly to the kinds of portrayals of the world found in the set of metaphors. The 1908 edition of

F. E. Belden's Christ in Song: Best Gospel Hymns, New and Old, lists in its topical index two classifications of hymns with the theme of home: THE HOME ETERNAL lists 23 separate gospel hymns with titles such as "Beautiful Beyond," "Heaven At Last," "Home of the Soul," "No Tears in Yonder Home," and "Sweet Bye and Bye"; HEAVENLY HOME lists 17 separate gospel hymns, including "Harvest Home," "Homeland," "No Night There," "Some Sweet Day," and "Who Are These?"<sup>51</sup>

The third determinate of Sizer's analysis is the form of the hymn.

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<sup>50</sup> Frances R. Havergal, "Light After Darkness," Gospel Hymns, No. 5 (New York: Biglow & Main, [1890], 190.

<sup>51</sup> F. E. Belden, comp. and publ., Christ In Song: Best Gospel Hymns, New and Old (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1908), x, xii.

Not only what the hymns say, but how they say it, reveals something about the way relations among human beings or between humans and deities are conceived. I wish to call particular attention to one very important aspect of form, namely the hymn's mode of address. Some hymns call upon the deity in praise or prayer; others are addressed to a specific audience, either sinners or Christians, still others have no clearly defined audience but seem to be simple descriptions or affirmations. Those differences mark the most important formal distinctions among hymns within the gospel-hymn type, and in comparison with other sorts of hymns.<sup>52</sup>

There is a temptation to cast a long glance backward toward the hymns that have formed such a consistent core to our oldline hymnody, and assume they represent a theologically stable collection of hymns; hymns that have survived numerous social upheavals and cultural changes. That is an assumption that this project challenges, for—as I have already suggested—our hymns have evolved since the time of Ambrose through ecclesiastical tension.

Often, hymns appear to have begun as a positive witness against perceived hostile ideologies. They follow a pattern of speaking originally from the fringe of the faith, and then over time, to its heart. New hymns for an oldline faith must appropriate this historical perspective if there is to be granted a creative liberty to contemporary writers and composers. Clergy and church musicians struggling with introducing new hymns to their congregations able to make that bridge of understanding will find far less resistance to the questions, "Why this hymn?" "Why now?" Taking seriously the metaphors, theme, and form of our hymnody shaped by the language we use, can better help us critique what has preceded us as church hymnody, and will provide the oldline churches incentive to grow from the creative edge of our faith.

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<sup>52</sup> Sizer, 26.

### Scope and Limitation of the Project

It is the task of this project to present a rationale for the introduction of new and contemporary hymns into congregations. The rationale sets forth an examination of four crucial moments in Protestant hymn development; a survey of what new trends are appearing in American non-traditional churches, and how those trends might inform our oldline worship practices; and to present a number of newly composed hymns with guides to their introduction into oldline worship.

### Procedure for Integration

The examination of four crucial moments in Protestant hymn development will center on the works of Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, John and Charles Wesley, and Ira D. Sankey. They have been chosen for their innovative and transitional creativity as hymn writers and prompters of new hymns into traditional congregational worship practices.

Second, I will relate the principles uncovered in the work of these five persons to my examination of contemporary uses of music.

Third, I will identify new and original hymn texts representative of these contemporary trends. The texts will reflect several of the emerging theological streams found in today's oldline churches, in addition to utilizing my experience as a local church pastor to identify key areas in modern life where there is an opportunity to sing about ourselves and the world, ourselves and creation, ourselves and the wholeness of God in Christ.

### Chapter Outline

The second chapter sets forth a brief series of case studies on Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, John and Charles Wesley, and Ira D. Sankey. This background assists me in setting forth the premise that the Protestant church has a long tradition of hymn writers whose work has been an effort to help the contemporary congregation reflect upon and articulate its theology. Each of the figures examined sought

to revise and make current the language metaphors and images as well as musical contexts for the worship and liturgy of their people.

The third chapter explores the impact of contemporary culture upon today's hymn writing. Problems and issues to be identified include the concern over language and imagery in hymns, anthropocentrism, technology, and the evangelical challenge.

Personal observation and experience drawn from a 1991 sabbatical provides anecdotal substance to the scholarly understandings of other commentators in this fourth chapter on sample contemporary hymn texts and its music. Added to these samples are four original hymns composed by the author.

The concluding chapter offers resources from which pastors and church musicians can draw usable contemporary hymns, proposes ways in which they can introduce and incorporate new hymns into the worship setting, and suggests how contemporary hymns can be utilized in creating an environment for worship, praise, preaching, and prayer in oldline churches. Lastly, the chapter also includes sections on MIDI music and copyright permission.

## CHAPTER 2

### I Love To Tell the Story

Protestant congregational music and singing really begins as an accompaniment to the influences of Martin Luther and the processes at work in the Reformation. I say processes because the Reformation was not a single event, but an accumulation over 150 years of isolated, local dissident religious activities inspired by individual charismatic leaders: John Wyclif in England in the late fourteenth century, John Huss in Prague a generation later, and Jerome Savonarola in the latter half of the fifteenth century in Italy. Not until 1517 and Luther's dramatic publication of his 95 theses on Indulgences did the Reformation become galvanized into a coherent movement.

#### Martin Luther

Although there were numerous theological and ecclesiastical ramifications to Luther's actions, his effect upon hymnody and congregational singing was profound. Where the Lollards of the early fifteenth century and John Huss had previously been openly contemptuous of the Church's liturgical isolation of lay Christians,

hymnody was Luther's great vehicle for allowing the congregation vocally to participate in public worship, and it is easy to see that as a function of the general demand that the laity be no longer regarded as people who must listen silently, either to instruction or to worship.<sup>1</sup>

In E. E. Ryden's The Story of Christian Hymnody there is a quote from Luther in Walther's 1525 collection of hymns:

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<sup>1</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 15.

I am not of the opinion that all sciences should be beaten down and made to ease by the Gospel, as some fanatics pretend, but I would fain see all the arts, and music in particular, used in the service of Him who hath given and created them.<sup>2</sup>

With Luther's insistence that all believers constitute a priesthood, by extension of that belief the laity ought also participate in the worship. What Ambrose had once envisioned as the vitality and centrality of congregational singing, Luther now reasserted as essential.

During that intervening period Church councils varied in their attitude toward hymns.

[The] Council of Laodicea forbade the use of "private psalms"; by the seventh century, however, the Council of Toledo threatened with excommunication the churchmen in Spain and France who resisted the use of hymns in divine worship... [During] the Middle Ages the Latin and vernacular hymns which were available were not used in the mass. They were intended for private devotions or extramural church functions such as the gatherings of the Dominican preachers.<sup>3</sup>

### The Hymn Text

Up to the time of Luther's influence on the Reformation, the Mass was conducted in Latin, except for the sermon, which was often done in the common tongue. Singing, when used, was relegated to the priests and the choir. Luther's entry into the debate changed all this, for just as the Reformation introduced the peoples' own language into the worship, it also provided a common language by which people could express themselves in congregational song.

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<sup>2</sup> Ryden, 58.

<sup>3</sup> Susan S. Tamke, Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1978), 16.

Luther viewed worship as still comprising units of the Mass. Previously, only the choir had sung portions in the Mass; now, Luther's congregation had occasion to sing as well. There were two broad categories for music in his liturgical form: the fixed components—the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei; and the psalms, which varied from week to week and season to season.<sup>4</sup>

Luther's hymns mostly comprised translations or re-working of Latin hymns for congregational singing. In 1524 he published Etlich Christliche Lieder, a German language hymnal comprising only eight hymns,<sup>5</sup> the first of what would be nine additional collections. Four hymns by Luther, three by Speratus, and one by Justus Jonas made this little hymnbook widely popular throughout Europe.<sup>6</sup>

This first hymnal is particularly useful in understanding a second level of hymn writing in which Luther engaged; it was a means to convey the church's teaching. He saw hymns as a primary means of implanting the church's teaching in young minds.

That initial hymnal contained his very first hymn, "A New Song," written to celebrate the virtues of two young Augustinian monks who were the first Lutheran martyrs burned as heretics at Brussels on July 1, 1523. Witnesses to the death of the young boys reported that one, Heinrich Voes, uttered these words as the fire began to encase his feet: "Behold, blooming roses are strewn around me!"<sup>7</sup>

Upon hearing that report and those words, Luther was inspired to conclude "A New Song" with the lines:

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<sup>4</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel J. Rogal, A General Introduction to Hymnody and Congregational Song (Metchucen, N.J.: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1991), 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ryden, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Ryden, 59.



Summer is even at the door.  
 The winter now hath vanished.  
 The tender flowerets spring once more,  
 And He who winter banished  
 Will send a happy summer.<sup>8</sup>

In writing "A New Song" Luther moved away from recasting of scripture or psalms, to draw upon contemporary experience and images for the proclamation of the Christian faith. Some have said it is more a song of protest and defiance than anything else. But it well illustrates how he blended the native language with contemporary imagery to convey the New Church's distancing from the traditions and practice of Rome. In other words, Luther was contextualizing the faith in this hymn. It was not to be the last time he would do so.

Perhaps best known of all Luther's hymns, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," (written in 1529 in the city of Coburg when the term Protestant was first used), is a battle hymn based upon Psalm 46. It reveals in its lyric Luther's summoning of all spiritual powers to the aid of a threatened cause. In particular, it shows Luther's church to be a fighting church—fighting on both the political and intellectual fronts.<sup>9</sup>

In resisting the 1500-year-old Roman hierarchy with all its entrenched spiritual privileges and its political and financial power, Luther felt that he had only one helper- God. The "mortal ills" were those not only induced by combat: they were social as well- the hopeless poverty of the peasants, the ignorance of the masses, the oppression of the barbarous laws. These Luther attributed to "our ancient foe," who was of course primarily the devil, as ancient as the Garden of Eden; but he was now incarnate in the worldly Pope Clement VII and in the ambitious, intriguing "Holy" Roman Emperor, Charles V. All

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<sup>8</sup> Ryden, 59.

<sup>9</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 16.

these constitute a triangle of hate and power such as  
the world had seldom seen.<sup>10</sup>

Luther dominated the hymnody of his era. It was he who collected selected works into hymnals, and there were very few other contemporary writers that could compete with him. He was articulate and energetic, and "used words the way other leaders used armies."<sup>11</sup>

What was of equal critical importance to Luther's inspiring and instructive lyric, was the music to which it was set. Part of the effect of the Reformation was a counter-view to traditional Roman liturgical standards: hymns of contemporary human composition were now considered an acceptable form of praise. Many of his own penned lyrics were set to popular secular tunes, as well as to the familiar chants and hymn tunes.<sup>12</sup> The exuberant singing of these hymns, without accompaniment, became a trademark of the "Protestant" movement, and Luther's enemies frequently lamented that the German people were singing themselves into Luther's terrible doctrines, and that his hymns destroyed more souls than all of his writings and sermons.<sup>13</sup>

### The Musical Form

That Luther viewed contemporary music as a useful element of Christian worship is witnessed to by his own words:

Next to the preaching of the Scriptures, I afford music  
the highest place in the church. I want the Word of God  
to dwell in the hearts of believers by means of songs. I

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<sup>10</sup> Albert Edward Bailey, The Gospel in Hymns (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), 315.

<sup>11</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Tamke, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Osbeck, 70.

would allow no man to preach or teach God's people who did not realize the power and use of sacred music.<sup>14</sup>

It would not serve us well, however, to pass uncritically on the notion of contemporary music as a context for evangelizing the Christian faith. In his book Twentieth Century Church Music Erik Routley authors a chapter on "The Vexation of 'Pop.'" In it he observes that it did not occur to people before the twentieth century to categorize music in terms of what kinds of people might enjoy it.

We can insist on this even against any who wish to say that the secular elements in the medieval carols, or the use of folk-song by Martin Luther as the basis for his Reformation hymns, or the use of music obviously derived from the style of the "Beggar's Opera" by the Wesleys, are examples of the same tendency at an earlier date.

The carols, whose magnificent juxtapositions of sacred and secular ideas shock and delight the modern singer (like "Tomorrow shall be my dancing day") are a gesture against the false separation of certain natural ideas from the Christian Faith, but they appear after two centuries of pseudo-puritan superstition, much more impressive to us than they would have appeared to those who first sang them.

Luther's "pop-songs" can be called so only if one remembers that what he was using was music associated with aristocratic rather than with artisan circles.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, Luther drew from what might be considered "high culture" rather than "popular culture" of his day. For all his impact upon returning congregational singing to the people in worship, his own documented musical ability on the flute and lyre, and his use of music which was already familiar to the majority of people in Germany, only 37 hymns are credited to his authorship (see Appendix A). Of these, four are generally acknowledged to have survived in current hymnals: "A Mighty

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<sup>14</sup> Osbeck, 71.

<sup>15</sup> Erik Routley, Twentieth Century Church Music (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1964), 154.

Fortress Is Our God"—based upon Psalm 46; "Out Of The Depths I Cry to Thee"—based on Psalm 130; "From Heaven Above To Earth I Come"—a Christmas hymn; and "Christ Jesus Lay In Death's Strong Bands"—an Easter hymn based upon earlier hymns, including the Latin Easter sequence, Victimae Paschali.<sup>16</sup>

With Lutheran worship styles having gained influence in much of Europe, congregational singing was being established as part of the liturgical foundation for Protestant worship.<sup>17</sup> While the specific form of worship and use of congregational singing may have varied in different countries and under different reformers, at least Luther returned to the concept of congregational singing by the people.

For today's oldline churches, Luther's perspectives can help educate congregations and support church musicians in several critical areas. He tinkered with traditional musical forms and transformed them into a more accessible style. He valued integrity in preparation and performance. If a text did not meet the critical test of being the Word of God in song, it could not be rightfully sung in worship. He was an advocate of the principle that good music—be it Gregorian chant or opera—was good music and had a place in the worship of God.

One other issue relevant to today's church musician is that Luther, [while] exalting the role of the congregation... never minimized the role of organist or of the choir in church music.... He upheld the right of musicians to an adequate and assured income from church sources.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, Sing With Understanding (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 91.

<sup>17</sup> Luther D. Reed, "Luther and Congregational Song," Papers of the Hymn Society 12 (New York: Hymn Society of America, 1947), n.p.

<sup>18</sup> Robert M. Stevenson, Patterns of Protestant Church Music (Durham: Duke University Press, 1953), 4.

Isaac Watts

The hymn flourished within the Lutheran-influenced portion of the Reformation churches, but it was quite another issue in that segment of the church influenced by Calvin and Zwingli. The greater portion of hymns which Luther and his adherents wrote were of "long and shapely stanzas."<sup>19</sup> Luther wrote poetry in ballad and art-song form, to which music was then adapted from the music of his time.

By contrast, English hymns came from quite different origins, reflective of the differences between Luther and Calvin. Their temperaments were a complete contrast.

Luther was a genius at public relations, Calvin an essentially private man; Luther was an artist with all the artist's impatience; Calvin was a scholar with a scholar's impatience. Luther fought his way out of the medieval Catholic church, Calvin thought his way out of it.<sup>20</sup>

Luther's personality and style was visceral and emotive, but his liturgy was grounded in the traditional form of the Mass, with congregation and choir each having a place in the singing of the faith through hymns. Calvin's Reformation was much more of a reasoned approach rigidly directed by discipline. The only singing allowed in Calvinist public worship was that in which the congregation itself participated directly. Further, what was allowed to be sung were the strictly metrical settings to the Psalms, and the Psalms only. Calvin totally forbade any singing which did not contain Biblical words, and all congregational singing was done in unison, and a cappella.

There was a rich musical legacy in England long before the Reformation. French carols had been introduced at an early date, and as early as the thirteenth century original English carols began to emerge,

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<sup>19</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 19.

often retaining the French refrain (called burden), and incorporating Latin lines taken mostly from the Roman Mass.<sup>21</sup>

English musical forms developed as a variation of morality and ethical songs blended with the songs of ale-houses, songs sung by vendors in the marketplace, by wandering minstrels, as well as songs created as devotional verses by those in monasteries.

These early effusions must be classed as hymns, in our familiar use of that word to designate religious lyrics. But hymns, in the stricter sense of "church song" or "liturgical verse," they were not in fact or in the minds of the clerks who composed them; to whom a "Hymn" meant the stanzas appointed to be read or sung in the Office for the day, of course in the Latin language.<sup>22</sup>

The truth is that with the possible exception of the carol, none of these musical forms lent any significant foundation to the development of English hymnody. This is because when the Reformation came to Britain, the congregational singing style of John Calvin was appropriated. The practical effect was that both the English and Scottish churches became psalm singers rather than hymn singers. Freely composed hymns which were brought by English exiles back to England were encouraged to be used in private devotions and in home gatherings.<sup>23</sup> Strict Puritan suspicion of the immorality of humanistic literature lent further credence to retaining a strict scripturally-based lyric as the principal foundation to congregational singing.

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<sup>21</sup> Louis F. Benson, The English Hymn (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1915), 19.

<sup>22</sup> Benson, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Tamke, 17.

From the Reformation down to the end of the seventeenth century, the staple of English singing, then, was the metrical psalm. Because the meter of more familiar French tunes made difficult English translations, the English metrical Psalter was an indigenous creation. The most widely used compiled version was first published in 1562 by Sternhold and Hopkins, and achieved such immediate popularity among English churches that it took on the reputation of being "an almost authorized psalm book."<sup>24</sup> Scottish churches preferred Calvin's own Geneva Psalter, eventually incorporating it into the Presbyterian Book of Common Order. The English Psalter of Sternhold and Hopkins became known as "The Old Version," while a 1696 edition published by Tate and Brady became known as "The New Version." This latter version became widely used in North America until 1800, although the Puritans of Salem initially used Sternhold and Hopkins, until New England Puritans published in 1640 their own collection known as The Book of Psalms Faithfully Translated Into English Meter. This became more commonly referred to as The Bay Psalm Book.

English editors initially took the Genevan spacious tune which incorporated up to eighty syllables and paired it down into fifty-six syllables, all of equal lines. But Puritan fastidiousness refined it even more severely, producing twenty-eight syllables, or as we have come to know it, Common Meter.<sup>25</sup>

[Editors] found themselves quite unequal to the task of providing every psalm with its own tune- had they attempted this, the monotony of meter would have made all the tunes sound all much the same. And when they returned to England in 1558 bringing with them an experimental psalter with music...they brought only a few tunes, almost none of which have survived in common use. By 1700

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<sup>24</sup> Norman Victor Hope, "Isaac Watts and His Contribution to English Hymnody," Papers of the Hymn Society, vol. 13 (New York: Hymn Society of America, 1947), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 26.

the Old Version provided, after input from 150 years of composing, 17 tunes for the canticles and special hymns (more or less one for each) and 39 tunes for the Psalms.<sup>26</sup>

If the Lutheran hymn was considered poetic and emotive, the eighteenth century congregational praise psalm was essentially dull. Some of that was due to the flat quality of its lyric. But to a larger extent, it may be said that the method of singing contributed significantly to its blandness.

In an age when many congregations could not read and most churches could not and would not afford multiple copies of the Psalter, a clerk read each line to the congregation, after which the worshipers sang the line; this practice was known as "lining out."<sup>27</sup>

New England practices of the singing of psalms give us further insight as to how congregations lined out their hymns. It appears from diaries of the period that the psalms were chosen by the minister to fit the sermon topic or a timely theme. Sometimes a psalm would be chosen in order to send a not-so-subtle message to the congregation or some of its members. At times only selected verses from the psalm were sung, again at the discretion of the minister.

The role of Precentor (or Clerk or Deacon) in lining out the hymn was more than reciting the verse to be sung. It was also the precentor's task to "set" the psalm.

A Precentor (or Clerk, or Deacon), located below the pulpit, would stand, announce the Psalm and tune, and then read (or sing) each line separately, the congregation repeating after him. This at least gave a uniform pitch and reminded singers of the tune, but the whole process was at the mercy of the Precentor's musical ability (or lack of

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<sup>26</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 26.

<sup>27</sup> Tamke, 18.



same).... It was also time-consuming, for it meant that everything was sung twice; and some of those Psalms had a prodigious number of verses.<sup>28</sup>

Those same diaries of that era reveal that things did not always go smoothly for the Precentor.

Capt. Frary's voice failing him in his own Essay [to set the tune], by reason of his Palsie, he calls to me to set the Tune, which accordingly I doe;.... After Evening Exercise, 2d part 84th Ps. Litchfield; I knew not that [I] had the Tune till [I] got to the 2d line, being somewhat surprised [*sic*], though [I] designed that Tune. I would have assisted Capt. Frary but scarce knew what Tune he design'd; and the Tune I guess'd at, was in so high a key that I could not reach it. (Oct. 25, 1691)<sup>29</sup>

### The Hymn Text

It was into this environment of psalm singing that Isaac Watts emerged to become recognized as the "Father of English Hymnody." Son of dissenters, Watts refused the generous offer of a wealthy patron of the Established Church to study and take holy orders. Instead he prepared for Independent Congregational ministry.

By most accounts, Watts very early in life showed signs of being a poetic genius. The psalms in strict metrical form made him quite impatient with the state of English hymn singing. Openly expressing displeasure with the psalm singing in his father's church in Southampton, one of the church officers

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<sup>28</sup> Barbara Owen, "The Bay Psalm Book and Its Era," *The Hymn* 41, no. 4 (October 1990): 15.

<sup>29</sup> David W. Music, "The Diary of Samuel Sewall and Congregational Singing in Early New England," *The Hymn* 41, no. 1 (January 1990): 10.

replied, "Give us something better, young man."<sup>30</sup> The following Sunday evening Isaac Watts' first hymn was sung at evening service. He was eighteen years old.

What distinguishes Watts as hymn writer is his significant departure from the principle, formulated by Calvin and carried through by Reformed churches, that Christian song is defined by its strict adherence to biblical texts. Someone had to write hymns that went beyond the conventions of the day. It would require a poetry to counter the metrical monotony of the psalm book, at the same time offering a lyric that reflected the experiences of people who were to sing them. Furthermore, to break from the conventions of line singing would require someone with a firm understanding of what hymns could do and why they mattered. Isaac Watts was the right person at the right time to break through with these innovations.

As has earlier been alluded to, there was ample Puritan suspicion of the immorality of popular literature and its power to sway and unduly influence otherwise responsible persons. As a poet, Watts subtly argued that he had an ethical responsibility for the effect of his poetry upon the souls of his readers, thus defining a place for original poetry in Calvinist religious life.

The novelty of Watts' view, as we watch it unfold, is that his version of literary morality and religion is attuned to contemporary psychology, which in its historical turn was indebted to the spiritual self-consciousness of the Puritans. The promotion of virtue depended upon the poet's capacity to move his reader, to inspire feelings conducive to virtue and piety. This feature is characteristic not of romance but of sensibility. Religious feeling was good in itself, a hallmark of piety, and good will as a motive force, encouraging virtuous living.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ryden, 269.

<sup>31</sup> Madeleine Forell Marshall and Janet Todd, English Congregational Hymns in the Eighteenth Century (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 30.

It is particularly germane to the work of this project to make note of the fact that when non-psalm hymns began to emerge in worship for congregational singing, it was in the non-conformist churches that they first appeared. As an Independent (Congregational) minister, Watts put his considerable poetic skill to work to finally bridge the transition from metrical lined psalm singing to free hymn singing. Watts was not the first, but he was determinative.

Benjamin Keach, a Baptist minister, is generally credited with having first introduced to the Free Church the practice of singing a hymn at the close of the Lord's Supper. It was sung there, he reasoned, in imitation of the apostles who were reported in scripture to have sung a hymn before departing following the Last Supper. His innovative use of the hymn so strategically placed in the worship did not gain wide acceptance.

In 1689 The General Baptists declared the hymn singing was "so strangely foreign to the evangelical worship that it was not conceived always safe to admit such carnal formalities." In fact, Keach's own congregation was divided on the issue of hymn singing and in 1693 the dissidents formed their own church.<sup>32</sup>

It fell to Watts to reinterpret the role of psalmody. He argued that many of the psalms were not Christian, in fact were plainly inciteful of violent sentiments and attitudes. He wrote in the Preface to his first published volume of Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1707:

Some of them are almost opposite to the spirit of the Gospel: Many of them are foreign to the State of the New Testament, and widely different from the present circumstances of Christians.... Thus by keeping too close to David in the House of God, the Veil of Moses is thrown over our hearts.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Tamke, 19.

<sup>33</sup> See Tamke, 20.

Watts began to propose criteria on his "System for Praise" for the renovation of Psalmody, and set forth a new standard of Church Song, having three principle criteria:

First, it should be evangelical, not in the sense that New Testament songs be allowed to "supplement" Old Testament Psalms, but so that the whole body of Church Song be brought within the light of the Gospel.

Second, it should be freely composed, as against the Reformation standard of strict adherence to the letter of Scripture or the latter paraphrasing of Scripture.

Third, it should express the thoughts and feelings of singers, and not merely recall the circumstances or record the sentiments of David or Asaph or another.<sup>34</sup>

Watts was offering a new rationale for contextualizing the hymn in public worship. Its evangelical criterion broadened the theological scope and possibility of language being an instrument for teaching and proclaiming a relevant faith. Its criterion of free composition placed righteous poetry at the forefront inspiring religious faith and proper devotional attitude. And the criterion of expressive thoughts and feelings contextualized the hymn in a way no one in England previously had done.

Watts provided poetic expression for familiar states of mind shared by all believers and, as he articulated such feelings, clarified the correct devotional attitude.... The desired end of the hymn thus became the education of religious sensibility by means of the supervised refinement of human feeling into devotional response, with the help of the Blessed Spirit.

The focus of the hymn is, ultimately, the individual singer and his or her spiritual progress.<sup>35</sup>

It must be said that in Hymns and Sacred Songs Watts showed great sensitivity to the prejudices he was challenging, a timely reminder to all who struggle with the task of creating new hymnals. This

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Benson, 110.

<sup>35</sup> Marshall and Todd, 33.

first hymnal was divided into two sections: the first contained 210 of his hymns, the second contained more familiar paraphrases of the psalms. Showing unusual tact and good foresight, he submitted this first edition for critique and two years later came out with a revised second edition with hymn masterpieces including "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross," "Give Me The Wings Of Faith to Rise," "How Bright These Glorious Spirits Shine," and "Come Let Us Join Our Cheerful Song."<sup>36</sup>

In 1719 Watts produced another volume of published hymns entitled Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament. This edition likewise contained what were to become masterpieces: "Our God, our help in ages past" (Ps. 90), "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath" (Ps. 146), "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun" (Ps. 72), and the Doxology "From all that dwell below the skies" (Ps. 117).

Writing in the preface to this published volume of works Watts delighted in having "Christianized" the Psalms, and further noted

the Pleasure of being the First who have brought down  
the Royal Author into the common Affairs of the Christian  
Life, and led the Psalmist of Israel into the Church  
of Christ without anything of a Jew about him.<sup>37</sup>

Today many Christians would rightfully find that last statement most offensive and prejudicial. Yet Watts had amalgamated the two main streams of church song--paraphrases of scripture and devotional lyric poetry--and forged from them two unique English hymn types: (1) hymns of praise that incorporated original expressions of devotion and thanksgiving; and (2) psalms that had been Christianized.

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<sup>36</sup> Cecil Northcott, Hymns in Christian Worship (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), 25.

<sup>37</sup> Northcott, 25.

To appreciate Watts' brilliance and impact, we need only consider an example from each of the aforementioned hymn types. The first type are those of "human composure," as Watts would say. From his first published collection comes the hymn "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thrones compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.<sup>38</sup>

The first point to be made is that this hymn is a good illustration of the kind of poetic construction that Watts utilized in his earlier hymns to assist the practice of lining out. As he himself put it,

I have seldom permitted a stop in the middle of a line,  
and seldom left the end of a line without one, to comport  
a little with the unhappy Mixture of Reading and Singing,  
which cannot presently be reformed.<sup>39</sup>

Written for use in the Communion Service, Watts was inspired by Paul's declaration that one does not have to become a Jew before becoming Christian (Gal. 6:14). Albert Edward Bailey's treatment

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<sup>38</sup> Pilgrim Hymnal (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1958), 177.

<sup>39</sup> See Bailey, 49.

of this hymn shows that survey in stanza 1 goes beyond visual sighting of the cross, but contemplation in the present of the meaning of Christ's death for the world; stanza 2 emphasizes the choice we must make between vain things and accepting the blood of Christ which is the symbol of our salvation; stanza 3 Watts works with a physical image of the mingling of Christ's blood and water and transforms them into spiritual equivalents of sorrow and love; stanza 4 moves the singer to a climax of personal resolve. Thus, observes Bailey, "In this combination of imagery, insight and passion, Watts reaches the heights of devotional poetry."<sup>40</sup>

### The Musical Form

In time, the power of this praise hymn, this devotional song, and its poetic structure, allowed for its being sung without being lined, but in strophe form. Add to this the impact of a technology that made printed music accessible to the public and what emerges is the beginning of the evolution of what was to become bound editions of denominational hymnals forming the traditions of congregational singing in oldline churches.

While it might be presumptuous to say that before Watts English churches sang psalms, and after Watts they sang hymns, we cannot ignore the tradition of revision which he brought to his treatment of the psalms. By the early eighteenth century the lined psalm had been in use for nearly 150 years. It was the musical tradition of the English church, as well as of the New England churches. The lyrics were scripture, the Word of God, and God's Word needed no improvement from human composure. As strict as were the metrical tunes to which these psalms were sung, so were the traditional viewpoints regarding any alteration of the lyric!

Watts had a deep appreciation for the psalm as a repository of praise. His objection was the uncritical use by Christian churches of psalms, which he felt undercut the very spirit of the Gospels. In

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<sup>40</sup> Bailey, 50.

his Preface to his 1719 publication of The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Apply'd to the Christian State and Worship, he sought to articulate why it was proper to adapt the Psalms so as to make David speak in a contemporary manner.

I could never persuade myself that the best Way to raise a devout Frame in plain Christians was to bring a King or a Captain into their Churches and let him lead and dictate the Worship in his own Style of Royalty, or in the language of a Field of Battel.... Would I encourage a Parish-Clerk to stand up in the midst of a County Church, and bid all the People joyn with his words and say, "I will praise thee upon a Psalter; or, I will open my dark Saying upon the Harp...." Why must all that will sing a Psalm at Church use such words as if they were to play upon Harp and Psalter, when Thousands never saw such an instrument?.... Have not your Spirits taken wing and mounted up near to God and Glory with the Song of David on your Tongue? But on a sudden the Clerk has proposed the next Line to your Lips with.... Burnt-Offering or Hyssop, with New-Moons and Trumpets and Tumbrels in it, with Confessions of Sins which you never committed, cursing such Enemies as you never had, giving Thanks for such Victories as you never obtained.... How have all your Souls been decomposed at once and the Strings of Harmony all untuned!<sup>41</sup>

Watts' point, it seems, was to ask whether the King James Version in meter was the only possibility for public praise? It is a question relevant to our own day, as congregations wrestle with expanding choices of hymnals that offer a range from completely traditional texts to editions with major textual revisions of all hymns previously containing strong masculine images, militaristic images, and patriarchal metaphors. A third level of hymn collection is sampler or hymnal companions containing original texts blended with both traditional and contemporary tune settings. Before new theologically original work can be widely assimilated, the process begins in a revision of hymns from an earlier generation.

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Bailey, 52.



### Impact on American Hymns

Before departing the work of Isaac Watts it is perhaps useful to briefly consider his impact upon American churches. Truth is, the Bay Psalm Book was the principal source of hymnody in the colonies- if singing was done at all. Thomas Walter published The Ground and Rules of Musick explained in 1721, in which he described a sad state of affairs for congregational singing. Very few tunes were sung from memory, there were no songs read from notated song sheets. Walters reports that it seemed like five hundred different tunes all roared out at the same time, with the singers one or two words apart, and in a manner so drawling that he himself had "twice in one note paused to take breath."<sup>42</sup> Others report that this disorder had in fact become a tradition for the American church and any attempt to change it brought bitter controversy.

Prior to publishing his 1719 edition of The Psalms of David Imitated, Watts had corresponded with Cotton Mather of Massachusetts, and had submitted several samples of his work for critique and approval. Realizing the atmosphere was not yet ripe to introduce his System of Praise, Watts had to wait until the revival influences of the Great Awakening before his works found their way into American reprint. Here, as in England earlier, it was not among the mainstream churches that this new style of hymn was being sung, but principally among those churches most deeply moved by the revival spirit. Indeed, Watts' hymns were as likely to be sung spontaneously outside the meetings of worship. An observer of the period around 1743 wrote of a new phenomenon, "the singing through the streets, and in Ferry-boats" by companies of people coming and going between meetings.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, Watts himself was not concerned with revivalistic efforts, but purely liturgical reformation in the ordinary worship of the Free Church.

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<sup>42</sup> Benson, 162.

<sup>43</sup> Benson, 164.

Since the bulk of American congregational singing well into the eighteenth century consisted of the traditional Psalms, it is noteworthy that for most congregations there were set tunes which could be interchanged in the singing of most of the psalms. This was the flexibility of the metrical mode. Psalm 72 could be sung to the tune of any number of different settings. The diaries of Samuel Sewall are particularly valuable in that he makes frequent mention of the actual tunes which were used in the singing of the psalms. In all, he mentions twelve. David W. Music lists them in approximate order of their frequency:

- |                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Windsor     | 7. 119th Psalm                |
| 2. St. David's | 8. Cambridge Short            |
| 3. York        | 9. "G"                        |
| 4. Litchfield  | 10. Martyrs                   |
| 5. Low Dutch   | 11. High Dutch                |
| 6. Oxford      | 12. Westminster <sup>44</sup> |

This provided a stable, but rather limited musical selection for musicians and non-musicians alike. Watts, as was stated earlier, did not invent hymn measures, but wrote to comply with basic verse metric forms already used in psalm singing. In other words, he took old familiar tunes and wrote lyric to fit them. Basically his metrical style conformed to the three most common in Sternhold and Hopkins—common, long, and short. He did not attempt to improve or develop in some bold new fashion the musical dimension of Congregational Song. Watts was single-mindedly focused on the lyric as hymn, making of it a common song approachable by greater numbers of worshipers. In this, his writing involved nothing more than loyalty to the Protestant principle that every part of public worship should be conducted in a language understood by the people. However, his hymns were designed for those already in the church. It would fall to others, such as the Wesleys, to take the next step in bringing hymns to the unchurched masses.

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<sup>44</sup> Music, 11.

### John and Charles Wesley

The eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival of England and the Great Awakening in North America were each notable social movements on both continents. In England, the early decades found Non-conformist churches slowly replacing the older metrical psalms with Watts' Hymns and Psalms Imitated. These became the norm of Congregational Praise in Non-conformist settings. It was not so in the established churches, which clung tenaciously to the Old Version of Sternhold and Hopkins or, in some instances, updated their hymnody to the New Version of Tate and Brady. This meant that the old custom of lining out the psalm prolonged a congregation's ignorance of the musical possibilities in congregational singing. It is reported that in London some churches began to remove congregational singing entirely, replacing it with choirs made up of "charity children" or others.<sup>45</sup>

With this as the setting for the beginning of the Methodist Movement within the Church of England, our attention turns to that revival which came with the inspired and tireless work of John and Charles Wesley. However, the development of the English hymn does not follow a path straight from Watts to the Wesley brothers, "but wends its circuitous path through the environs of the Church of England."<sup>46</sup>

Four years prior to Watts' publication of his Hymns, John Wesley was born in Epworth Rectory, with his brother Charles born within six months after their publication. They were raised within the Anglican Church on a diet of congregational singing born of the metrical psalter and other collections of chanting tunes for psalm reading, psalm tunes for metrical psalms, as well as anthems offered by children's choirs, or blended choirs of children and adults.

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<sup>45</sup> Benson, 219.

<sup>46</sup> Rogal, 90.

If we have a general description of the music and worship environment internal to the Church, we also have a general description of the environment external to the Church. England was ripe for revolution or reform. Beneath the wealthy upper classes which lived and acted with values and perspectives turned wholly inward and without moral scruple, and the increasingly comfortable middleclass that emulated its upper class by ignoring the world about it, there was a vast core of people living in dire poverty, ignorance, and chaos. This underclass was ignored equally by Church and State. The legal system treated this underclass with extreme prejudice, and subjected adults and children of both sexes to judgments that would stagger our imaginations today. Over 160 offenses could result in hanging, regardless the age or sex of the accused—from picking a pocket for more than a shilling to poaching a rabbit from a gentleman's estate.

Charles Wesley writes in his Journal that he preached in jail to 52 felons waiting to be hanged, among them a child of ten. One of the most popular shows was the mass hanging held every six weeks at Tyburn Hill, London.<sup>47</sup>

Child mortality rates were high among the general population, but exceedingly high among the poor. Neglect of orphans and foundlings in workhouses was especially callous in church operated facilities.

The parish register in Greater London for 1750-1755 shows that in many places all the children died within twelve months of entry. Some wardens took bastard children off their mother's hands at so much per head, spent the money in hilarious living and let the babies die. In one parish in Westminster, out of five hundred bastards so received over a series of months, only one survived.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bailey, 74.

<sup>48</sup> Bailey, 74.

Even the dissenting or non-conformist free churches distanced themselves from the terrible conditions in which the underclasses lived, becoming cold, institutionalized, and non-evangelistic. The evangelical awakening took root in this kind of social ferment.

### The Hymn Text

The personal histories of John and Charles Wesley have been documented in numerous ways and in numerous other volumes of work. Suffice it to say they brought to English hymnody a much greater sense of the hymns' purpose in reaching out and drawing into the community of faith persons by way of conversion. The hymn was to become an evangelical tool, performing the work of conversion essential to religious revival.

Isaac Watts changed the metrical psalm into new hymns for those people already burdened within the church. The Wesleys produced inspired hymns for those burdened in life that they might come into the church.

It was while aboard ship during a crossing of the Atlantic to Savannah, Georgia, that John Wesley came into contact with a group of 26 Moravians headed for America. Such crossings were always a bit tenuous and potentially dangerous, and Wesley was greatly impressed by the sense of peace that community of Moravians were able to achieve through their singing of their songs of faith. So impressed was he, that he immediately undertook the task of learning German that he might translate their moving hymns into English. It was during John Wesley's stay in Georgia that he published a first collection of hymns, including translations of five Moravian hymns. This first unofficial Anglican hymnbook was published in 1737 by an associate of Benjamin Franklin, comprising seventy psalms and hymns.

Carlton Young, in writing on this collection, cites editorial work done for the 1964 facsimile edition of the Charlestown Collection of 1737. All but one of the sources for those seventy psalms and hymns had been documented. Wesley edited each and every one of the hymn texts.

Wesley cut stanzas, changed words and whole phrases, but more importantly, changed all the texts from whatever foot and meter the poet had written into six basic meters, all iambic in some combinations of 6s and 8s; for example, George Herbert's "O King of Glory, King of Peace," Trochaic 7474, Wesley changed into "King of Glory, King of Peace," iambic CM.<sup>49</sup>

John Wesley repeats a pattern of adaptation and change of traditional hymn forms, to create a process and environment in which the old forms yield to the new.

During his Georgia mission, John Wesley served as pastor to parishes in Savannah and Frederica, while Charles served as secretary to General James Oglethorpe. John's Georgia experience included having 12 public charges brought against him concerning his ministry. Two of the original charges presented to the Savannah Grand Jury by the chief magistrate in 1737, related directly to John Wesley's use of psalms and hymns in worship. Charges number 2 and 3 read:

By altering such passages as he thinks proper in the version of the psalms, publicly authorized to be sung in the church;

By introducing into the church and service at the altar compositions of psalms and hymns not inspected or authorized by any proper judicature;<sup>50</sup>

Both these charges were dropped when the majority of the Grand Jury, in reviewing the original twelve charges, formed its ten true bills against him. The significance should not be lost on us, however, that the development of new hymn forms begin with alteration of existing lyric. Such was the case with Luther, with Watts, and now with John Wesley. Re-working what is already familiar is a precursor to the creation of entirely new forms and poetry.

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<sup>49</sup> Carlton R. Young, "John Wesley's 1737 Charlestown Collection of Psalms and Hymns," *The Hymn* 41, no. 4 (October 1990): 20.

<sup>50</sup> Young, 21.

It was not John Wesley alone who was influenced by the Moravians aboard that Atlantic crossing of the Simmons. Charles Wesley was equally impressed and found in the Moravian texts a sense of mystical and spiritual depth that fed his own deep hunger for the praise of God. Having returned to England from Georgia, Charles and his brother sought out the Moravian teacher and preacher Peter Bohler to expand upon their earlier Moravian encounters. Falling seriously ill, it was on Whitsunday, the Day of Pentecost, May 21, 1738, that Charles Wesley found his spiritual peace, or conversion experience. The profound moment prompted Charles to write the very next day a hymn of which he wrote, "I began a hymn on my conversion."<sup>51</sup>

Three days later John Wesley underwent his famous experience in the meeting of a religious society on Aldersgate Street, London. Rushing immediately to the bedside of his younger brother, John reportedly shouted "I believe," whereupon those gathered with the brothers commenced singing a hymn. Was perhaps the hymn they sang the one Charles had written after his experience three days earlier? Regardless, it is considered to be the Birth Hymn of the Evangelical Revival. No longer found in American hymnals, it is yet treasured in English hymn collections.

From this dramatic genesis in hymn writing Charles Wesley was to become a prolific writer of verse; so much so that thereafter

hardly a day or an experience passed without its crystallization in verse. The result, 6500 hymns on hundreds of Scripture texts and on every conceivable phase of Christian experience and Methodist theology.<sup>52</sup>

The universal acceptance of the hymns of the Wesleys is so broad that a cursory look at current hymnals reveals that, for example, in the 1980 edition of the Pilgrim Hymnal, published for use primarily

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<sup>51</sup> Elmer T. Clark, Charles Wesley (Nashville: Upper Room, 1957), 3.

<sup>52</sup> Bailey, 84.

within the United Church of Christ, there appear seventeen hymns attributed to Charles Wesley, and six to John.

In considering the form applicable to this extensive collection of hymn treasure, several characteristics emerge. The Charles Wesley hymn is:

1. Rich in the variety of poetic meters. Not content to remain with the old psalm meters, Wesley exhibited superb mastery of at least twenty meters.
2. So constructed that sound and sense coincide. Wesley rarely fails to make the ends of his lines correspond with natural pauses in thought, thus making them very suitable for singing.
3. Bold and free in scriptural paraphrase. Rather than keeping strictly to a restatement of the original in a mechanical manner, Wesley also makes imaginative comment on his scriptural passages.
4. Skillful in the mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Latin vocabulary.
5. Masterful in the use of the conventional eighteenth century literary devices- careful rhyme, repetition, chiasmas.<sup>53</sup>

In 1746 a collection of Wesley hymns was published (Hymns on the Great Festivals and Other Occasions), with twenty-four tunes by John Lampe. His tunes were "highly decorated with embellishments to the melody."<sup>54</sup>

In Madeleine Forell Marshall and Janet Todd's treatment of the Wesleyan hymn as form, they find an intimacy established that transcends the Calvinist strain. It also makes use of spectacle for dramatic impact and dramatic display to entertain the singers of these new form hymns. Broken speech patterns highlight the "cult of feeling,"<sup>55</sup> so essential to redefining the religious experience born of revival. As example, Hymn LXXXVIII is a reflection upon the experience of Thomas:

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<sup>53</sup> Eskew, 124.

<sup>54</sup> William Lloyd Hooper, Church Music in Transition (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), 137.

<sup>55</sup> Marshall and Todd, 64.



4. Breathe on us, LORD, in this our Day,  
And these dry Bones shall live,  
Speak Peace into our Hearts, and say  
The HOLY GHOST receive.
5. Whom now we seek O might we meet!  
JESUS the Crucified,  
Shew us thy bleeding Hands and Feet,  
Thou who for us hast died.
6. Cause us thy Record to receive,  
Speak, and the Tokens shew,  
"O be not faithless, but believe,  
In me, who died for You."
7. LORD, I believe for me, ev'n me  
Thy Wounds were open'd wide,  
I see the Prints, I more than see  
Thy Feet, thy Hands, thy Side.
8. I cannot fear, I cannot doubt,  
I feel the sprinkled Blood:  
Let every Soul with me cry out  
Thou art my LORD, my God!<sup>56</sup>

As the authors note in their explication of this hymn, stanza 4 is an address to Jesus by the group. Stanza 5 begins with a collective sigh, addressed to no one in particular. Strophes three and four have the singers playing the part of Thomas, asking to see the signs of redemption. Jesus then, in stanza 6, speaks to the singers. In stanza 7, the plural "us" is now become the singular "I," as the believer offers professing response to Jesus. In stanza 8, the self addresses itself, then invites other believers to join in the affirmation to Jesus, "Thou art my LORD, my GOD!"<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Marshall and Todd, 69.

<sup>57</sup> Marshall and Todd, 69.

This dramatic invention, breaking up the patterns of speech, the audacity of intimacy in which God is now spoken to as a friend, the predominant note of joy and confidence, presented a bold and emotional extension of Watts' earlier demand that personal experience be a guide to the hymn form. The new hymns of John—and particularly Charles—Wesley both fed and expressed this new passion, all part of the revival environment that was to help reshape the church and society.

### The Musical Form

It fell to John to give thoughtful attention to the musical side of this emerging Methodist Song. Believing with Martin Luther that the devil should never have all the good tunes, John was constantly looking for music from every available source.

[In] Wesley's time there was a huge demand for 'tunes', and an ample reservoir from which to draw them, to be found in the light operas current in Handel's time. The promoters of opera in London in the 1730s more or less invented 'show business' in developing a new faculty for calculating exactly what would draw people in crowds. The Beggar's Opera, the Cobbler's Opera, and many other attractions of the kind are the real source of early Wesley hymnody. Oddly enough, Handel couldn't make opera pay, and retreated into oratorio. But the new public demand for instant music put pressure on editors of hymn tune books to recast older music so that it sounded like the instant music people now wanted.<sup>58</sup>

Charles Wesley's poetic genius became expressed in meters that previous hymnists had never encountered. Therefore, John's search for appropriate tune settings became far ranging. Revealing of John's life-long prejudice for up-lifting tunes is an entry in his diary begun on the trip to America in

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<sup>58</sup> Routley, Christian Hymns Observed, 43.

which he admits that he disliked slow dragging songs, writing that the "slow drawing way naturally steals on all who are lazy."<sup>59</sup>

An example of the Wesley commitment to new music appears as early as 1742, with the release of A Collection of Tunes Set to Music As They Are Commonly Sung at the Foundry. The collection offered forty tunes, with the text of one stanza each underlaid. Its price of six pence was intended to make it available to the poor.<sup>60</sup> Only three of the printed tunes came from the "Old Version" psalm tunes.

In 1753, a friend to the Wesleys, Thomas Butts, compiled a collection of tunes which were published under the title Harmonia Sacra. This edition drew tunes from German-Moravian sources, along with contemporary tunes composed during the flourishing English Restoration. When, eight years later, Wesley's Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed was published, hymn texts and tune bound into one volume, Wesley acknowledged Harmonia Sacra as a principle source of his tunes.

It was in Select Hymns that Wesley for the first time offered directions for singing, which included the admonition to learn the tunes provided before learning others, and that they be learned precisely as printed, without alteration as might be suggested by "Masters of Music [who are] above following any direction but their own."<sup>61</sup> The five remaining directions were, briefly: to "sing all the verses, sing lustily, sing modestly, sing in time, and above all sing spiritually, with an eye to God in every word." (See Appendix B.)

As hymn and tune grew familiar, congregational singing became less dependent upon the traditional styles of line singing. As bodies of "Singers" to lead worship grew, a more formal organizing

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<sup>59</sup> Fred Kimball Graham, "John Wesley's Choice of Hymn Tunes," The Hymn 39, no. 4 (October 1988): 30.

<sup>60</sup> Benson, 239.

<sup>61</sup> Rogal, 97.

of the music program in worship began to take shape. First came the choir, then more intricate tunes and harmonies, then anthems, and finally the organ.

Instrumental music was not a major factor for church music in the Wesleyan era. Not more than three chapels installed organs while John Wesley lived.<sup>62</sup> Open air meetings would have made accompaniment impractical, since the great congregations would have drowned out any instrumentation short of a full orchestra. That would have been deemed as too florid.

#### Impact on American Hymns

Although John Wesley's first published edition of psalms and hymns appeared from an American publisher, it was not until 1756 that a Philadelphia publisher reprinted Hymns and Spiritual Songs Intended for the Use of Real Christians of All Denominations. All indications are that it met with little early success, and it was not until the 1760s that Wesley hymns started to gain recognition. This turnaround was due to the publication of American anthologies of hymn texts which included the Wesleys, as well as an increasing number of tune books appearing that contained settings of Wesley texts.

With the evangelistic fervor taking hold in America, such renowned preachers as George Whitefield began to develop a revival format which included a great deal of singing. Naturally, the hymns of his dear friends John and Charles Wesley added greatly to the success of this format. Whitefield himself published a collection of hymns, of which many Wesley texts were included. Unfortunately, these hymns received no attribution, and the general impression was left that these texts were, in fact, Whitefield's own. Consequently, while a number of Wesley hymns became fairly popular in early America, they were not identified as such. For the most part, American collections simply printed Wesley hymns anonymously.

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<sup>62</sup> Benson, 243.

Not until 1799 and Amos Pillsbury's United States Sacred Harmony was the Wesley hymn finally an established and popular fixture of American hymnody. Pillsbury's tune book included tunes for twenty-four Wesley hymns. From that point on, American tune book compilers began to recognize the excellence of the Wesley texts, and the Wesley hymn became as recognized for the popularity of the tunes to which they were set as from the texts themselves.

One other related factor of the American revival movement of the eighteenth century must be given brief recognition. With the general contribution of the Wesleyan hymn being one of freedom and spiritual elation, the frontier spirit which accompanied the western revival produced an even more free style of singing.

Had they been on the spot no doubt this would have appealed to the Wesleyan heart. It was not until 1820 that most of the Wesleyan hymns became fully available for the Methodist Episcopal Church, but by then—under the impetus of the Great Revival— the Camp Meeting had provided its own style of spontaneous song. Composed of rough and ready couplets, in ballad form, with refrains, and all intensely personal, the Camp Meeting hymns were often incorrectly known as "Wesley's hymns."<sup>63</sup>

While the frontier revival was largely Methodist in spirit, it was not of the discipline and guidance set forth by Wesley. But without doubt, their hymns did as much as any other human agency to kindle the fervor of what came to be known as Camp Meetings, Conventions, Gospel Meetings. In later years these influences were to be incorporated into the nineteenth and twentieth evangelistic campaigns of Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey, Billy Sunday and Billy Graham.

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<sup>63</sup> Northcott, 28.

The evangelical hymn had been born, and a place secured for Wesleyan Hymnody in the history of religion itself. Where Isaac Watts upgraded hymns that were already in use by people already in the Christian church, the Wesleys were to forge an entirely new direction through proclaiming by way of the hymn a "free gospel" which was directed toward the unsaved and the unchurched.

While it is Charles Wesley's legacy to have such a large body of hymns that remain in actual use today, it falls to John Wesley to be acknowledged for preserving them due to his role as editor.

The editor's function is at all times essential to the well-being of Congregational Praise, and Wesley was the first of note in the long line of English hymnal compilers. He exercised his function autocratically, but on the whole with distinguished success. Charles Wesley's hymns owe much to the strong hand of his brother, not only for the winnowing they so much needed, but for the verbal revision to which he subjected them insistently, before their first appearing and after it.... Wesley sincerely believed he could improve other people's hymns, whether Watts' or his brother's, and along with this self-confidence had a total lack of confidence in the ability of other "hymn-tinkerers."<sup>64</sup>

The adaptation of hymns, or tinkering, moved increasingly into the hands of editors in publishing houses, but this probably did not deter local church ministers from the practice of exercising their own editorial prerogatives.

The distinctiveness of the Wesley hymn rests upon a subjective change in atmosphere, emotion, and expression.

The vital importance of individual emotional experience indicates that the preeminent characteristic of Wesley's hymns is their subjectivity, when subjectivity is understood

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<sup>64</sup> Benson, 247.

as qualified by the requirements of the congregational hymn. The singers' feelings are encouraged and directed in response to each hymn subject. They self-consciously inject themselves into Bible stories, becoming actors in hymn-drama. They read their names on the Lord's hands. They pine and gaze together. They are directed to relate the subject matter of faith to their own emotions. Emotion is assigned a positive value, to the extent of dissolving hymn logic in feeling display. This appreciation of religious emotion is a very distant relative of the highly controlled sensibility and care use of visual stimuli found in Watts's hymns.<sup>65</sup>

It was the distinctive foundation upon which would be built a praise song in American religious music, the Gospel Hymn.

Ira D. Sankey

Just as the American frontier Camp Meeting provided a fertile ground of religious revival in the early part of the eighteenth century, resulting in the production of popular hymns, so the urban revivals later in the same decade brought forth an entirely new body of popular church song— the gospel song, or gospel hymn. The musical center stage was shifting to America.

As Erik Routley notes in his work The Musical Wesleys: 1703-1876, congregational singing during the heyday of the Wesleys was done in simple fashion. A solo style hymn-tune did not embellish the melody with complicated harmonies or accompaniments. In addition, the tunes conformed to a narrative style, in which the text was complete unto itself.

The repertory will have widened as time went on, but basically, hymns remained hymns, and congregations did not transform themselves abruptly into choral societies.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Marshall and Todd, 79.

<sup>66</sup> Erik Routley, The Musical Wesleys (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1968), 41.

But there is a subtle stylistic distinction which marks the transition from the Wesley evangelical hymn to the gospel song. That is the absence of refrain in the former. Charles Wesley never wrote hymns with refrains, which is exactly what late nineteenth century evangelical hymn writers began doing. Routley implies that the absence of the refrain in the Wesley hymn suggests that both Wesleys distinguished sharply between the educated and the utterly illiterate, opting to build up the literate and substantial, John Wesley's "the rich sinners."

There is no better way of making the illiterate sing  
than by writing narrative hymns with simple choruses-  
which is what so many of the old carols are, and what  
the "Sankeys" are at their best.<sup>67</sup>

#### Beginnings of the American Gospel Hymn

The use of the term "Sankeys" is traced to the influence of Ira Sankey and the development of the gospel hymn as it grew out of the Praise Services of the mid- to late- nineteenth century. The specific term "gospel hymn" emerged in the mid-1870s, but this form actually began its evolvement decades earlier. There are, very briefly, five concurrent streams that flow into the finished product we call the American gospel hymn/song.

First, the American scene was graced by the presence of Lowell Mason, who brought his enormous and important talents to bear upon the American cultural landscape. Mason worked hard to establish a broad base for education in music for children. Where previously the prevailing popular view was that music was the province of the gifted few, Mason saw things differently. He ran free classes for children in Boston, established training classes for teachers, and published textbooks. Through these efforts, vocal music was established as part of the curriculum in the Boston public schools in 1838. Throughout his life he was recognized as an excellent editor, composer, arranger, church choir director, and organist.

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<sup>67</sup> Routley, The Musical Wesleys, 42.



Mason produced dozens of music books of all kinds. Besides textbooks, tunebooks, and hymnals, he published books of chants; children's books for sabbath schools; collections for choirs with anthems, "quartettes," psalms and chants; books for private devotional use in the home; collections of "spiritual songs" for use in informal social gatherings; sheet music for soloists or small groups; sometimes with a keyboard accompaniment; plus a variety of works co-edited with associates.<sup>68</sup>

Mason's criteria for church music included the basic premise that it must be simple, chaste, correct, and free of ostentation. (See Appendix C.) His influence was so profound that this "father of American church music" worked tirelessly to bring organized congregational singing to the forefront, particularly among his own Congregational and other free church traditions. His approximately 700 hymn tunes leave a somewhat cloudy authorship, since critics claim he borrowed quite freely from other sources, without crediting these sources. Nonetheless, Lowell Mason had laudable goals which were

to develop congregational participation in church music; to provide music within the grasp of all participants, yet appropriate to worship; and to educate both clergy and congregations about the vital roles of music in worship.<sup>69</sup>

The impact of Mason's dedication to broadening the understanding and use of music in worship was recognized in this obituary published by the Philadelphia Bulletin in August of 1872:

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<sup>68</sup> Carol Pemberton, "Teaching People Their Sacred Songs: Lowell Mason and His Work," The Hymn 43, no. 1 (January 1992), 19.

<sup>69</sup> Pemberton, "Teaching People," 20.

His personal contributions to sacred music, principally in the form of hymn tunes, were very numerous, and have...enjoyed an enduring popularity. [His sacred works are] remarkable not only for their quiet simplicity and natural melody, but [for] retaining a hold upon the religious world which is rarely achieved.... He has taught the people their sacred songs, whoever else may have made their laws.<sup>70</sup>

Among Lowell Mason's enduring works are the tunes for "Nearer My God To Thee," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "My Faith Looks Up To Thee," and an adaptation of Handel's "Joy to the World."

A second influential stream contributing to the development of the American gospel song came from out of the Sunday School Movement of the nineteenth century. Although originally begun in England, it quickly took hold on American soil as an extension of the Great Awakening revival movement. Hundreds of religious songs were written that would be enjoyed by children, while at the same time teach them spiritual truths. During this period there began to flourish a publication of Sunday School hymnals, which proved to be equally enjoyed by adults as children. Lowell Mason's student, William B. Bradbury (1816-1868) became a leading composer and publisher of Sunday School music, and is the first composer of this idiom whose works survive in current American hymnals. He is credited with such hymn tunes as "Jesus Loves Me," "The Solid Rock," "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and "Just As I Am." A repetitive, melodic, and mnemonic style characterized both the hymn text and tune.

The third stream to influence the development of the gospel song was the founding of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), first in England in 1844, then later in the United States in 1851. This movement was not so much about creation of new hymns, as it was a formidable opportunity to promulgate the singing of new hymns as they emerged from sources such as the Sunday School movement. Large religious conventions were sponsored by the YMCA, as well as very popular noon-day

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<sup>70</sup> Carol A. Pemberton, Lowell Mason (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988), 38.

prayer meetings. One of the features and attractions of these events was enthusiastic group singing of newer spiritual songs. While decidedly ecumenical in its outreach, the YMCA found its earliest support through the efforts of lay people coming out of the largely Protestant free churches. The reliance upon enthusiastic singing of spiritual songs found much more acceptance in this ecumenical environment than in most churches from which dedicated lay leaders came.

A fourth stream influencing the development of the gospel hymn came with the rise of American foreign missions. The Congregational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, organized in 1806, were the first of several denominational mission boards to organize in the early nineteenth century in America. Hymn writers were quick to respond in writing hymns to challenge Christian young people with foreign missionary service.

The fifth stream, and climax of the evolution to the gospel hymn, came with the final quarter to the nineteenth century and the evangelistic crusade. It centered in the ministries of people such as Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), who conducted mass evangelistic crusades in both the United States and England. It also produced its own poets and musicians, notably Fanny Crosby and Ira D. Sankey. Largely through their leadership, the gospel hymn became a major force in urban revivalism beginning in the 1870s.

#### The Song Master

Ira Sankey was born in western Pennsylvania in 1840, and as a young boy loved music and was drawn to anything musical. One of these attractions was the Sunday School. As a youth, he sought out everything that could feed his love of music, and his travel to musical conventions eventually resulted in his meeting William Bradbury and other composers of the Sunday School movement. It is from them he gained his formal musical training.

As a teenager he attended a revival near his home and was converted, thereafter joining the Methodist Episcopal Church. Until the outbreak of the Civil War he devoted most of his time to careful

Bible study, was appointed Sunday School superintendent, and was designated leader of the church choir.<sup>71</sup>

Following the Civil War, Sankey began to work within the YMCA movement as a song leader, which brought him again into direct contact with William Bradbury among others. As the Sunday School work began to mingle with that of the YMCA, the Sunday School books furnished Sankey and others with music that became the model of the gospel hymn.

Moreover, the Sunday School movement and YMCA provided a form and structure to their gatherings which were called Praise Services. "Services of Song" given by Philip Phillips at Sunday School conventions, Christian commission meetings, and in association with evangelistic crusades, offered such evangelists as Dwight L. Moody a venue for bringing a whole new style to their campaigns.<sup>72</sup>

It was at the Indianapolis YMCA convention of 1870 that Moody and Sankey first met, resulting in Sankey's being called to direct music at Moody's church in Chicago. When Moody was invited to conduct a series of British evangelistic meetings, he invited the young Ira Sankey to accompany him as song leader. That tour was to establish him with international recognition, based on the collection of hymns he brought with him, as well as the sheer force of his personality and musical ability. Over the next two decades the names Moody-Sankey were to represent the premiere model of evangelistic crusade and gospel music.

What were these songs that so captured the British imagination?

The answer is American Sunday School songs.  
Sunday School songs imbibed of the popular

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<sup>71</sup> Mel R. Wilhoit, "Sing Me a 'Sankey': Ira D. Sankey and Congregational Song," The Hymn 42, no. 1 (January 1991): 13.

<sup>72</sup> Benson, 484.

secular, genteel song style of the Stephen Foster tradition. This consisted of diatonic but tuneful melodies in a homophonic texture with simple harmonies and slow harmonic rhythm. One of the most telling features was the popular verse/chorus format. Simplicity and immediacy of impact were important features of both text and music.<sup>73</sup>

Many other collaborators followed close on the heels of the Moody-Sankey success in England to rush volumes of new hymns into publication. But Moody-Sankey remained at the forefront, and following the great Moody meetings in Brooklyn and Philadelphia in 1875, an immense distribution and sales of their gospel hymns blanketed the country. What is clear is that while the gospel hymn is almost exclusively associated the names Moody and Sankey, their part, says Louis Benson,

was to bring an older movement to the culmination of a great popular success rather than to inaugurate a movement that was novel. Nor did the songs they brought forward with so much effect constitute either in words or music a type of hymn distinctively new or even clearly marked off from its predecessors. And yet their popular success was certainly distinctive, and presents a new phase of hymn singing as notable in its way as the XVIIIth century outburst of Methodist Song; and it remains to be accounted for.<sup>74</sup>

#### Gospel Lyrics

The latter part of the nineteenth century was a period when there flourished a great deal of popular religious poetry. With the rise of the Sunday School movement, YMCA, and Mission Boards, there also came into being a number of journals devoted to espousing the cause of these agencies. These

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<sup>73</sup> Benson, 487.

<sup>74</sup> Benson, 488.

publications were fertile ground for aspiring poets. A case in point is Fanny Crosby, the leading poet of the gospel hymn movement. Fanny Crosby, the blind Methodist teacher from New York who is credited with at least 8,000 hymn texts, was a recognized secular poet before she turned to writing hymns. Sankey set eleven of her texts to music, representing the single most texts from any one poet with whom Sankey worked. During his lifetime, Sankey had more than 100 of his tunes published as settings for the texts of fifty-three different authors.<sup>75</sup>

These texts he often found in publications. As editor of the Gospel Hymns series, he was constantly on the lookout for material with which he could work. International copyright laws did not exist, so he had access to a wide range of material. One of his more popular tunes, "A Shelter in the Time of Storm" came into being when he read in a small London paper lyrics from a favorite song of fisherman in the north of England. It was apparently a song they sang as they sailed into their home harbors on the edge of an approaching storm. Originally sung in a minor key, Sankey composed a tune in the major key, and wrote the text of a refrain.<sup>76</sup> This made it more singable by people on both sides of the Atlantic.

Perhaps the best-known and loved of all Sankey gospel hymns was "The Ninety and Nine" (see Appendix D), first sung in 1874. In his personal recollections of this song, he discovered by chance a poem while reading a newspaper on a train between Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland. The poem appeared in a corner of the paper, buried among advertisements. Tearing the piece out, he put it away into a musical scrapbook until he could use it at a later time.

That time came in the second day of Edinburgh meetings at a noon meeting. Moody had just spoken on "The Good Shepherd," and was followed by Horatius Bonar who offered prayer. At the

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<sup>75</sup> Wilhoit, 16.

<sup>76</sup> Wilhoit, 16.

conclusion to Bonar's prayer, Moody turned to Sankey and asked if he had an appropriate song to conclude the service. As if led by the Holy Spirit, Sankey pulled out the little slip of newspaper clipping,

and placing the little newspaper slip on the organ in front of me, I lifted my heart in prayer, asking God to help me so to sing that the people might hear and understand. Laying my hands upon the organ I struck the key of A flat, and began to sing. Note by note the tune was given, which has not been changed from that day to this.<sup>77</sup>

The lyrics which fueled the gospel hymn's content offered a unique "language" to the culture of the revival. As Susan Sizer observes, "the lyrics of the hymns possess their own intrinsic interest as a central part of the language of revivalism."<sup>78</sup> Sizer sees the gospel hymn text as part of a linguistic form in which essential beliefs are expressed, which is then used in ritual settings.

The gospel hymns are most obviously an example of [this] type of text, because they encourage participation by singing; but they also represent a general description of the world.... As such they present strategies for solving general problems about the relations of human beings to each other and to the spiritual forces or beings of their universe.<sup>79</sup>

Another dynamic to the gospel hymn lyric, Sizer contends, is that it creates a sacred community, "raising the group and its members above the lesser beings which inhabit the world."<sup>80</sup> An example of the effect of this lyric comes from a Sankey hymn based upon the verse of Horatius Bonar, who was

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<sup>77</sup> Ira David Sankey, Sankey's Story of the Gospel Hymns and of Sacred Songs and Solos (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Co., 1906), 220.

<sup>78</sup> Sizer, 9.

<sup>79</sup> Sizer, 16.

<sup>80</sup> Sizer, 19.

retelling the familiar story of the Prodigal Son. Sankey wrote a refrain that, in the best gospel hymn tradition, uses this language of sacred community.

- Welcome! Wanderer, Welcome!
1. In the land of strangers, Whither thou art gone,  
Hear a far voice calling, "My son! my son!"  
  
["Welcome! wanderer, welcome!  
Welcome back to home!  
Thou hast wandered far away:  
Come home! come home!"]
  2. "From the land of hunger, Fainting, famished, lone,  
Come back to love and gladness, My son! my son!"  
[Refrain]
  3. "Leave the haunts of riot, Wasted, woe-begone.  
Sick at heart and weary, My son! my son!"  
[Refrain]
  4. "See the door still open! Thou art still my own;  
Eyes of love are on thee, My son! my son!"  
[Refrain]
  5. "Far off thou hast wandered; Will thou farther roam?  
Come, and all is pardoned, My son! my son!"  
[Refrain]
  6. "See the well-spread table, Unforgotten one!  
Here is rest and plenty, My son! my son!"  
[Refrain]
  7. "Thou art friendless, homeless, Hopeless and undone;  
Mine is love unchanging, My son! my son!"  
[Refrain]<sup>81</sup> (see Appendix E)

In comparing the gospel hymn with earlier praise songs of the Watts and Wesley eras, Sizer argues that both passion and surrender are the two strategic foci for the gospel hymn.

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<sup>81</sup> Belden, 3.



[Whatever] the varieties of portrayal, the message is clear: surrender, emotion, and intimacy, as well as passivity, are at the center of the salvation process. The intensity of passion and surrender increases as one moves from earlier hymns to later ones. By the time of Gospel Hymns, the concerns with emotions has changed from a general portrayal of the "heart" as the problem, to a strong focus on Jesus as the source of emotional strength.<sup>82</sup>

This element of passion was critical to the environment of the revival, as it shaped the form of both hymn and preaching. Moody was particularly skilled in the use of anecdote, transforming the sermon into testimony. In this regard, revival metaphors and linguistic conventions for hymn and sermon evolved that showed a clear set of contrasts born of the broad changes underway in American society.

The northeastern cities were undergoing vast changes with the rush of industrialization, immigration, and urbanization. Each of those elements dislocated persons from their families; men and boys left the farm to find work in the city; young women came from the farm and city to work in the factory; European immigrants arrived separated from family and culture, often to find themselves at the mercy of the unscrupulous and of prejudice.

The settlement of the West meant men leaving behind families to find fortune in gold mining, homesteading, or farming on the plains. Oftentimes, entire families left eastern cities to make a new life in the less-settled heartland, writing home of the combinations of adventure and extreme loneliness, of fruitfulness of the land and harshness of living.

All of these factors contributed to a general sense that history was changing, that forces beyond control were moving the nation into unseen territories, and that human passions were equally at risk. Turmoil and chaos were evident everywhere. The revivalists' testimony in song and sermon repeated such

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<sup>82</sup> Sizer, 39.

situations, yet promised being saved by the calming influence of home, or mother, or child, by a figure weak or dying but strong and courageous; all through a personal relationship to Jesus.

W. O. Cushing wrote "There'll Be No Dark Valley," to which Sankey wrote music as well as words to the refrain, which illustrates this function:

**There'll Be No Dark Valley**

1. There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes...  
     To gather His loved ones home.  
         [To gather His loved ones home,  
         To gather his loved ones home;  
         There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes  
         To gather His loved ones home.]
2. There'll be no more sorrow when Jesus comes...  
     To gather His loved ones home.  
         [Refrain]
3. There'll be no more weeping when Jesus comes...  
     To gather His loved ones home.  
         [Refrain]
4. There'll be songs of greeting when Jesus comes...  
     To gather His loved ones home.  
         [Refrain]<sup>83</sup> (see Appendix F)

Another sample comes from the same Belden collection, "Scatter Seeds of Kindness," by Smith and Vail.

1. Let us gather up the sunbeams,  
     Lying all around our path;  
     Let us keep the wheat and roses.  
         Casting out the thorns and chaff;  
     Let us find our sweet comfort  
         In the blessing of today,  
     With a patient hand removing  
         All the briers from the way.  
         [Then scatter seeds of kindness...  
         For our reaping by and by.]

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<sup>83</sup> Belden, 854.

3. If we knew the baby fingers,  
     Pressed against the window pane,  
 Would be cold and stiff tomorrow-  
     Never trouble us again-  
 Would the bright eyes of our darling  
     Catch the frown upon our brow?  
 Would the prints of rosy fingers  
     Vex us then as they do now?

[Refrain]

4. Ah! those little ice-cold fingers,  
     How they point our mem'ries back  
 To the hasty words and actions  
     Strewn along our backward track!  
 How those little hands remind us,  
     As in snowy grace they lie,  
 Not to scatter thorns- but roses-  
     For our reaping by and by!

[Refrain]<sup>84</sup> (see Appendix G)

Such a hymn text as this is representative of an anecdotal form which Moody and Sankey utilized in sermon and song, "calculated to awaken the careless, to melt the hardened, and to guide inquiring souls to Jesus Christ."<sup>85</sup>

Although there are countless further examples to draw from, it is possible to schematize the revival material in terms of contrast as presented by Sizer:

<u>NEGATIVE</u>	<u>VERSUS</u>	<u>POSITIVE</u>
City, money-making		Country, home, family, mother, child
Fear, sorrow, wailing		Love, sympathy, peace
Whirlpool, shipwreck, wandering		Lifeboat, shore
Weakness, temptation.		Strength in apparent weakness sacrificial death
World		Jesus, salvation <sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Belden, 568.

<sup>85</sup> Osbeck, 95.

<sup>86</sup> Sizer, 126.

As can be seen from this schemata, the positive elements of the gospel hymn/song all embrace an intimacy of Savior and of haven, and providing an imagery that is relatively easy to duplicate.

Nineteenth-century hymnists could imitate that type of hymn, or focus on just one of the metaphors and write an entire hymn around that, or invent other variations. What is distinctive is that they were selecting those kinds of metaphors more frequently than the ones in, say, most of Watts' hymns.... Further, there is clear evidence of imitation even within the popular hymnody of the nineteenth century. "Almost Persuaded" calls forth "Fully Persuaded"; "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" was virtually repeated by the same author in "I Love To Tell the Story"; "Just As I Am" produced the refrain, "Just as thou art."<sup>87</sup>

Thus, the baseline for the language of the gospel hymn/song is to help create a sacred community expressive of shared-yet-controlled emotions, reflected in the experience of the revival community as a metaphor for the sacred community.

#### The Gospel Hymn as Music

Those who delve into the theory and composition of music have not uniformly found gospel music to be a complete blessing. It has typically been treated as "a utilitarian art- not a fine art."<sup>88</sup> By and large, the music itself takes more the character of folk music, or popular music. This is due, in part, to the frequent use of the refrain as a mnemonic hook.

A comparison of typical gospel hymns with liturgically traditional hymns reveals significant compositional and performance distinctions between them.

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<sup>87</sup> Sizer, 128.

<sup>88</sup> Robert M. Stevenson, "Ira Sankey and 'Gospel Hymnody,'" Religion in Life 20, no. 1 (Winter 1950-51): 84.

**Liturgical Traditional**

1. Primary purpose is to glorify one or all of the persons of the Godhead.

Generally more objective and "vertical" in character.

2. Used primarily for Christians in a worship service.
3. Music is stately, dignified and devotional in character. Harmonically, the songs are characterized by frequent chord changes.
4. Notes of even time value. Comparatively few eighth or sixteenth notes.
5. Progresses in thought from one stanza to the next without the use of a refrain or chorus.

**Gospel Song Hymns**

1. Primary purpose is to give a testimony, an exhortation, a warning or an invitation.

Generally subjective and "horizontal" in character.

2. Used primarily in evangelistic, revival, fellowship services.
3. Music is usually rhythmically fast or lilting, generating a pervasive enthusiasm. Harmonically, the songs are characterized by fewer chord changes.
4. Notes of varied time value, with dotted notes predominant. The use of lilting 6/8 rhythm is common.
5. The thought of each stanza finds its supreme expression in the refrain or chorus.<sup>89</sup>

By the 1870s Sunday School hymnody had grown beyond itself, to the point where it began to blend into the popular culture. During America's centennial celebration of 1876, two of the country's most popular songs were "Grandfather's Clock" by Henry Clay Work, and "The Ninety and Nine" by Ira Sankey.<sup>90</sup> Gospel hymnody did not remain simply a religious venue, but was easily accessible by the general public and its taste for contemporary music.

While easily criticized in some quarters as being tunes that were "easy," "catchy," "sentimental," and not demanding much in the way of musical knowledge to perform or understand, the "Sankey" was

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<sup>89</sup> Osbeck, 96.

<sup>90</sup> Wilhoit, 17.

obviously reaching a segment of the population in both England the United States that had previously been untouched by mainline churches and their brand of music.

It is staggering, even by today's standards, to consider that during the heyday of the Moody-Sankey revivals, thousands-upon-thousands of persons crowded into arenas and halls to hear this music.

Only one of Bach's vast collection of over two hundred cantatas was published during his lifetime. But everything that Ira D. Sankey wrote was immediately published and avidly bought; just one collection of his sold in England alone eighty million copies within fifty years after its initial publication.

During a brief four months in London on his 1875 tour, Sankey sang...to an astronomical audience of over two million five hundred thousand people. It is an open question whether two million five hundred thousand persons as an aggregate total have listened to actual performances (excluding radio and records) of such masterworks of Bach as his Passions or his Masses in all the long years since first he conceived these compositions during the 1720s and 1730s.<sup>91</sup>

Sankey himself made mention on numerous occasions that it was much more difficult for him to find suitable words than tunes, thus giving an impression of the ease with which he and other tune makers were able to craft their melodies. What is absolutely clear is that gospel hymns found a receptive audience and deeply moved people. Equally as clear is the fact that this gospel hymn found its acceptance within churches outside the mainstream of late nineteenth century America. Methodists came closest to adopting and adapting some gospel hymns for their official hymnody, but no such acceptance was to be found among Congregational (U.C.C.), Presbyterian, Episcopal, or Lutheran published hymn collections until fairly recently.

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<sup>91</sup> Stevenson, Robert M. "Ira Sankey and 'Gospel Hymnody.'" Religion in Life 20, no. 1 (Winter 1950-51): 81.

It is said that Dwight L. Moody judged music entirely in terms of its mass effect.

He could form no judgment...by hearing it played or sung in private. He must see it tried in a crowd, and could discover in an instant its adaptation to awaken the feelings which he needed to have in action. If it had the right ring he used it for all it was worth. "Let the people sing," he would shout- "let all the people sing. Sing that verse again. There's an old man over there who is not singing at all, let him sing." No matter how long it took, he would keep the people at work until they were fused and melted.<sup>92</sup>

This purely utilitarian use of the hymn is what has driven many professional musicians and oldline ministers away from the gospel hymn. It is perceived as a music without life-sustaining quality, has been questioned as ethically manipulative, and has not fit the conditions of tradition and theology within oldline faith. Such devotion to "high art" is laudable; but "high art" may also not be as effective a way to touch vast numbers of people today who lie outside the parameters of a "high art" faith.

As culture changes, so do its art forms and musical expressions. The Old Testament lament of how to sing our songs in a foreign land is as culturally relevant an issue today as in preceding generations. Are oldline churches today at risk of becoming foreign lands to a new generation of singers? And how shall the integrity of our theology be maintained if our musical forms change along with a changing culture?

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<sup>92</sup> Ira Sankey Centenary (New Castle, Pa., 1941), 80, as cited in Stevenson. "Ira Sankey," 87.

## CHAPTER 3

### Live the Vision, Share the Dream

#### Contemporary Foundations

The past several decades have seen several significant movements in American church music that have left many oldline churches in a quandary over how to deal with the impact of these changes. First, there was the era of the sixties with the re-awakened interest in folk music as it accompanied the civil rights movement and the protest over United States' involvement in Vietnam. Soon, churches were incorporating some of this music style into their worship schemes, others offering a folk style worship as an alternative to the more traditional, in an effort to capture the popular mood of the times. These worship alternatives provided an atmosphere that was relaxed and informal, so it was not surprising that resistance was all-too-apparent in many a congregation. These tensions often revealed a sharp generational division.

The folk service had a limited lifetime in all but a very few churches, but its legacy cannot be measured in terms of the longevity of the worship form. The real impact of this short-lived period of congregational music was in its giving birth to a new generation of song writers and performers—such as Ray Repp and Peter Scholtes—who began a whole new phase in Christian hymnody, which for the present we shall refer to as contemporary Christian music.

In the aftermath of the era of the sixties two separate and independent trends began which have significance for oldline churches. The first trend began jointly within the theological circles of Roman Catholic and oldline churches, and was a new awareness of the importance of language; inclusive language and the words images which are carried in liturgy and song. Mary Daly at Boston College was among the first to gain widespread recognition for addressing this sensitive issue with the publication of



her book Beyond God the Father,<sup>1</sup> and before long there began to appear small anthologies with re-cast and re-worked lyrics to traditional hymns.

Among these first anthologies was Because We Are One People produced by the Ecumenical Women's Centers of Chicago. In the preface to the collection is stated a principal purpose for the need of this kind of anthology.

As persons become increasingly aware of the impact of sexist language on our private and collective thought, many women and men are finding they can no longer participate in worship events with a sense of joy.... Because of the power of language to shape our images and attitudes, we have chosen to re-write traditional hymns which are frequently used in church worship services.... [It is] for those who like Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," but can't tolerate singing "Father love is reigning o'er us, brother love binds man to man."<sup>2</sup>

The same year as Because We Are One People was published Sharon and Thomas Neuffer Emswiler published a guide to non-sexist hymns, prayers, and liturgies, Women and Worship. In it they offered guidance for, among other things, dealing with the language of hymns whether traditional or folk in style. Three options for hymn selection which the Emswilers proposed are: (1) choose non-sexist hymns already in church hymnals. (2) change the language of hymns that are commonly sung; and (3) create entirely new hymns. They also provided criteria to determine whether a hymn had non-sexist language:

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<sup>1</sup> See Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Because We Are One People (Chicago: Ecumenical Women's Centers, 1974), preface.

1. No masculine words used generically such as "mankind," "brotherhood," "sons of God," and so forth.
2. No masculine references to God such as "Lord," or "Father" and no references to God's reign as a "kingdom."
3. No masculine references to Christ other than "he," "him," or "his."
4. No references to the Church or to objects as "she."<sup>3</sup>

Although the Emswilers were by no means alone in their advocacy of language alterations in hymns, they certainly drew upon a deep tradition of Christian impatience in making their suggestions. As has been implied in the preceding chapter, Luther, Watts, and the Wesleys were each grounded in the hymnody that came to them as the tradition of their church. Each one, in turn, became engaged in the remaking of that tradition; some of it was done by changing already existing lyric, some of it by the crafting of entirely new verse in contemporary religious language. For those who object to changing the lyric of our greatest hymns on the basis of gender or other theological grounds, it is important to point to those very writers as examples of people who themselves participated in the revision of hymns.

One example of the way this style of revision can be traced is to take Psalm 90. It was contained in its entirety as a metric rendering within Sternhold and Hopkins's Psalter which was used by Church of England, Separatist, and Puritan worshipers until the eighteenth century. Psalm 90 became recast by Isaac Watts in his Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament as "Our God, Our Help In Ages Past," considered the great ceremonial hymn of the English nation. In its original 1719 setting, the hymn first appeared with the heading "Men frail and God eternal."<sup>4</sup> In Watts' opening stanza

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<sup>3</sup> Sharon Neuffer Emswiler and Thomas Neuffer Emswiler, Women and Worship (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 108.

<sup>4</sup> Albert C. Ronander and Ethel K. Porter, Guide to the Pilgrim Hymnal (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1966), 1.

he utilizes a personal style of address reflecting that of the Lord's Prayer, "Our God, our help in Ages past." In most modern hymnbooks, however, the opening stanza reads "O God, our help in ages past," which is a change introduced by John Wesley to convey the sense of awe.

In the 1984 edition of Inclusive Language Hymns Based on The Pilgrim Hymnal (1958), two additional changes appear from the original Watts' version. Hymn number 1, stanza 3, the first strophe reads "Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame;" in the revised version that same strophe now reads "Before the hills in order stood, or earth received its frame."<sup>5</sup> In verse 5, the first strophe in the original reads "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;" in the revised version it now reads "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all who breathe away."<sup>6</sup> The first revision takes away an exclusive female image to the earth, while the second revision suggests that time takes its toll on more than the male issue of a father. Mother earth is an ancient allusion, and in the earlier attempts to make a hymn's language inclusive, editorialists tended to strike everything decidedly male and female and cast it as a neutered image. More recent revisionists would argue that a hymn's language need not be entirely gender neutral, but reflect a rainbow of images—especially in references to God or the qualities we attribute to God.

People's responses to such adjustments are varied, but there is a tendency within congregations to view such adjustments as annoyances, or tinkering with the integrity of a text. Further, there is the complaint that hymns which are changed betray the integrity of the author. That view, however, is not wholly sustained in the fuller light of a hymn history in which the guiding lights of church hymnody were

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<sup>5</sup> Philip H. Ward, ed. Inclusive Language Hymns Based on The Pilgrim Hymnal (Amherst, Mass.: First Congregational Church, 1984), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ward, 1.

hemselves engaged in a process of making the hymn relevant and contemporary through revision and rewriting of familiar texts.

A second by-product of the era of the sixties was a growing recognition that cultural tastes were in transition, and that these tastes could be reflected in preferences for more contemporary settings of hymns than the traditional. In fact, over the past twenty-five years, it may be argued, popular culture has risen to have a more dominant impact than in previous generations.

### Cultural Environment

To speak of culture and its impact upon church hymnody is to open a complex and difficult issue. It is, nonetheless, critical to appreciating the musical challenge before the oldline church. Music is an expression of culture, but of what culture? Whose culture? T. S. Eliot wrote an essay in which he attempted to define culture as simply....that which makes life worth living. And it is

what justifies other peoples and other generations in saying, when they contemplate the remains and influence of an extinct civilisation, that it was worthwhile for that civilisation to have existed.<sup>7</sup>

In the study of culture, asked Eliot, is there any permanent standard by which we can compare one civilization with another? Can any culture develop "except in relation to a religion?"<sup>8</sup> It was his contention that a religion might be able to simultaneously influence a variety of cultures, but it was questionable whether any viable culture could come into being apart from some religious basis.

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<sup>7</sup> T. S. Eliot, "The Idea Of A Christian Society," in Christianity and Culture (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), 100.

<sup>8</sup> Eliot, 100.

Paul Tillich allowed for the separateness of culture and religion, but under the Spiritual Presence they become united. In his view the secular is permeated by the Spiritual Presence apart from the influence of the church when the Spirit powerfully expresses itself in the culture. This creates a convergence of the holy and secular, "a union which is actually a reunion because the holy and secular belong to each other."<sup>9</sup> And the holy needs and uses the secular language, images, and metaphors to express its beliefs. Thus, "religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion."<sup>10</sup>

Is it possible, then, to say that there are no cultural boundaries? Or that one culture might be superior to another? Or that within a given culture, one form of expression might be superior to another?

What of the aesthetic questions which culture raises? Can we place a higher value on the enjoyment one person receives in hearing a performance of the Bach "Passion," than the delight another person receives from listening to an Amy Grant concert? Is enjoyment a valid criteria of determining aesthetic value?

Frank Burch Brown in his writing on "Art, Religion, and the Aesthetic Milieu" is of the opinion that we cannot tell a priori "which elements of religion will at some point have aesthetic relevance or which aesthetica will accrue religious significance."<sup>11</sup> Further, what we deem to be pleasing or aesthetic does not ultimately come down to a definable set of objective criteria because what is ultimately deemed aesthetic results from

a process through which the work manages to work with the mind and self in a variety of ways, [while] the role of the respondent and of the social and cultural context in the constitution of the object cannot be minimized. What one makes of an aestheticon, religiously, surely will depend partly

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 248.

<sup>10</sup> Tillich, 248.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Burch Brown, Religious Aesthetics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 57.

on concerns, values, and expectations that one brings to the experience, and not only on factors immediately associated with the work itself.<sup>12</sup>

While we can neither measure nor weigh units of culture, it is always our experience of it that leads to evaluation and judgment. Any thoughtful analysis of culture will also require that authentic cultural experiences be looked at in their natural environment, and that a thick description be gained by way of history and interaction with other aspects of that same culture.

Gospel music, as one example, is much more than the content of its lyrics and upon which beat of each measure the accent falls. Gospel music also relates to parts of the culture in which it is found, plays a social role in communities, and has a style which can be compared to other musical forms within the same culture. It is the culture of Gospel music that must be taken as seriously as its music and words.

Yet, we have a far more critical need to understand art's intersection with culture and religion than through strictly reductionist proportions. Erik Routley responded in this way:

In a word, when hymn singing is self indulgent, it is thereby not a sacrifice; and where hymn singing is community-singing by a closed company, it is not a means of evangelism. I do not say that the singing of hymns for enjoyment is bad. I am saying only that if you are singing hymns for fun you need not expect to be thought advanced in Christian virtue for doing so.<sup>13</sup>

Routley carries forward this discussion by addressing an issue at the heart of this project: how do we face secularism and the power of popular culture in such a way as to draw from its better natures while being free to reject its lesser ones?

In the present situation, then, the glory of our hymnody is in its power for converting unbelief, strengthening faith, and binding together the Christian community in that disciplined charity of which singing together is a symbol.

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<sup>12</sup> Frank Burch Brown, 57-58.

<sup>13</sup> Erik Routley, Hymns and Human Life (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1959), 306.

The shame of our hymnody is in unreality, complacency, and spiritual slovenliness. We do wrong, this time of day, to make the Christian challenge seem falsely easy; therefore it is wrong for an educated congregation to sing Sankey. We do wrong to make the faith appear to be less than intellectually respectable; therefore, hymns that discredit the Christian doctrine are out of place. We do wrong to reach too low...to take refuge in the exactions of the world.<sup>14</sup>

Routley correctly establishes a principal means test for theological integrity, but seems more weighted toward the rational as against the affective vitality of hymns. Why should it be exclusively against our advanced Christian virtue to sing purely for fun in the joyous praise of God? Equally open to question would be a hymnody that avoids probing the deeper spiritual nature within and among the community.

With this in mind, is it possible to ascribe certain attributes that help us distinguish potential ways in which people may respond to the hymns that are used within a worship setting? It was a conscious choice which the Wesleys made in the creative process of writing their hymns, and it was certainly a conscientious process which Ira Sankey and Dwight L. Moody employed in using music as a means to establish the environment of the evangelistic crusade. By contrast, has the choice by oldline churches to retain a largely classical tradition created a Christian worship that today's unchurched seeker finds largely irrelevant and boring? And could the same be said among the young people of oldline churches who tend to leave following confirmation?

What are the cultural streams present within American culture and how do we begin to distinguish them? Kenneth A. Myers attempts to make this kind of distinction when he posits three cultural forms: high culture, folk culture, and popular culture.

High culture has its roots in antiquity, in an age of

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<sup>14</sup> Routley, Hymns and Human Life, 307.

conviction about absolutes, about truth, about virtue . . .  
[Its] essential features make it capable of maintaining  
and transmitting more about human experience in  
creation, and about God's redemptive intervention in  
history, than its alternatives.

Folk culture, while simpler in manner and less com-  
municable from one folk to another, has the virtues of  
honesty, integrity, commitment to tradition, and perse-  
verance in the face of opposition.<sup>15</sup>

Popular culture, Myers contends, is created by forces of modernity.

Modern popular culture is not just the latest in a series of  
diversions. It is rather a culture of diversion.... In the twen-  
tieth century (and into the twenty-first), Western nations  
possess social arrangements and technical possibilities that  
make modern popular culture a qualitatively different thing from  
any other cultural phenomenon, even though it may serve for  
individuals exactly the same function of diverting attention away  
from asking about the origin and destiny of life.<sup>16</sup>

Myers is not alone in his assessment of modernity's creating of popular culture. Neil Postman  
makes the case that technology has taken American society into a new post-literate age, thereby  
transforming our very way of forming images and metaphors for this culture. In an earlier era, the printed  
word provided America with its assumptions about intelligence, truth and the nature of discourse, based  
upon a vitally different role that the act of reading played in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He  
contends that in those earlier days,

the printed word had a monopoly on both attention and  
intellect, there being no other means, besides the oral  
tradition, to have access to public knowledge. Public  
figures were known largely by their written words, for  
example, not by their looks or even their oratory.... Think

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth A. Myers, All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1989), 59.

<sup>16</sup> Myers, 56.



of Richard Nixon or Jimmy Carter or Billy Graham, or even Albert Einstein, and what will come to your mind is an image, a picture of a face, most likely a face on a television screen.... Of words, almost nothing will come to mind.<sup>17</sup>

Postman's point is that we have moved in the latter twentieth century from a print-oriented to image-centered culture, and this shift shows the profound difference as to how people live in a culture "that provides little time for leisure, and one that provides much."<sup>18</sup>

The connection that Postman and Myers each make relative to this paradigmatic shift is that this popular culture is shaped by a technology that both entertains as well as informs. The technological advances in this century have been absolutely tied to creating an environment in which people can live with more material comfort than ever before; an environment in which the material comfort produces the luxury of leisure which is now more accessible and acceptable to all economic classes; an environment in which increased leisure creates the demand for a greater diversion, which becomes the foundation for a new economic and social enterprise based upon recreation and amusement.

Sociologist Ernest van den Haag nearly thirty years ago began to critique popular culture (which he labeled **mass culture**) emphasizing these characteristics:

1. Mass culture emphasizes the spectator and the vicarious experience.
2. Standardization is a result of trying to please an average of tastes.
3. Mass culture shows apathy toward true learning and aims at pleasure, thrill, and escape.
4. The market place is the most important factor in mass culture.
5. Popular approval is the main moral and aesthetic standard.
6. Excessive communication between people tends to weaken the bond between people as the sphere of communication grows larger.

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<sup>17</sup> Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 60-61.

<sup>18</sup> Postman, 61.

7. Mass media replaces the arts.
8. Mass culture creates an addiction to prefabricated experience and deprives individuals of autonomous growth and enrichment.<sup>19</sup>

A mere thirty years later we can already detect the profound shift to the predominance of American popular culture over high culture and folk culture, and its two principle attributes of novelty and the desire for instant gratification. The 1992 Presidential Election Campaign provided more than ample illustration of these attributes, as Bill Clinton ably utilized the technological access of mass communication to provide a novel look of a serious political candidate playing saxophone, then later conducting televised town meeting conferences around the country with supporters and friends, all suggesting a much more friendly and hospitable presidency. Novelty and instant gratification were recognizable hallmarks of this paradigmatic shift in the 1992 presidential election campaign, and reflect upon similar shifts underway in our culture to which the church is called to minister.

### The Church and Popular Culture

These elementary clues prompt reflection upon the impact of popular culture and religion in America, which in significant ways impact our consideration of hymnody. The picture today is quite different than ever before.

Prior to the seventeenth century the people of the Western world were not a particularly literate people. That is why statuary, paintings, stained-glass windows and music were so much a part of the church's way of telling its story. With the advent of the printing press and movable type, a monumental cultural shift began to take place across Europe as communication now made the paradigmatic shift to the printed page.

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<sup>19</sup> Ernest van den Haag, "A Dissent from the Consensual Society," Culture for the Millions?, ed. Norman Jacobs (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 58-60.

With the permanent settlement of New England in 1620, a very specific cultural force was brought to bear by those first Puritans: "they and their heirs were dedicated and skillful readers whose religious sensibilities, political ideas and social life were embedded in the medium of typography."<sup>20</sup>

While statistical data is nearly impossible to completely assess, it is well within reason to project that between 1640 and 1700 the literacy rate for men in Massachusetts and Connecticut was somewhere in the range of 89 and 95 per cent, quite possibly the highest concentration of literate males to be found anywhere in the world at that time.<sup>21</sup> The literacy rate among women in those same colonies during the same period is estimated to have run as high as 69 percent.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, the male literacy rate in England in the seventeenth century did not exceed 40 percent, so we may assume first of all, that the migrants to New England came from the more literate parts of England or from the more literate segments of the population, or both.<sup>23</sup> So deep was the early commitment to reading that within thirty years of the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony all New England towns passed laws requiring the maintenance of a "reading and writing school," larger communities committing themselves to maintenance of a grammar school.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Postman, 31.

<sup>21</sup> James D. Hart, The Popular Book (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Hart, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Lockridge, "Literacy in Early America, 1650-1800," Literacy and Social Development in the West, ed. Harvey J. Graff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 184.

<sup>24</sup> Lockridge, 184.

What was taking place, in other words, was a great shift in the way a culture understood its knowledge to be transmitted. Learning became book learning, and great institutions of learning were formed to promulgate such knowledge: Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth were founded by Congregationalists for the purpose of maintaining an educated clergy and populace. Other colleges and schools were similarly founded by other denominations to fulfill the requirements of transmitting a knowledge of faith and practical reason.

Nowhere was the impact of the printed word in America more telling than in its treasured practice of freedom of religion. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were completely open to public discourse and debate over great and weighty issues of theology. The various leading figures of the religious awakenings of the period--Jona-than Edwards, George Whitefield, and Charles Finney (nineteenth century)-- were not just powerful orators and preachers. Arguments over doctrine between the revivalist movements and the established churches was conducted through published pamphlets and books, which were read and then debated among the general public. Familiarity with the English language was essential, since these treatises were cogently written. For the Christian to speak of "the Word" had a very literal, typographic image affixed to it. That is the primary inheritance of the oldline church, with its insistence upon an educated and learned clergy, and with its two primary repositories of its faith being the Bible and hymnal.

What has changed in twentieth century America is that we are decreasing in our numbers as readers. Leith Anderson writes that today "most Christian organizations more than ten years old are print-oriented rather than image oriented. In other words, they assume that the basic means of communication hasn't changed. But it has."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Leith Anderson, Dying for Change (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1990), 131.

Numerous recent efforts by such groups as the Laubach Literacy Council has attempted to bring to the attention of local communities the increasing number of people who lack basic elementary skills in fundamental reading. Reading Is Fun (RIF) programs in local schools are trying to instill in young people a necessity for reading skills, as the effects of media technology cut into what we have long believed to be an essential way of teaching and passing on our cultural value and heritage. College faculty around the country report today that never have they seen so many entering students as unprepared in the basics of reading and writing.

Rather than gain information from the newspaper, a vast majority of Americans today access their information through the medium of television. As Anderson notes,

[R]ather than read a book, they wait until it is made into a movie. Music presentations are multi-sensory (not just listening, but seeing and smelling)- whether at a live concert with lasers or on MTV with sights that complement the sounds.

Reading promotes linear thinking- one idea logically follows another. Image-oriented persons are more inclined to think experientially.<sup>26</sup>

Television has become a focal point for a further criticism of popular culture: loss of attention span which is companion to the attribute of the need for instant gratification. But this issue is far more pervasive than television. Popular culture is impatient, and our technology is designed to respond to that impatience. Computers give us near-immediate access to information. Fax machines already supplant the more deliberate mail service. Telephone communication has become so sophisticated that one has the option of holding conference calls from a car modular phone. Overnight air delivery services promise receipt of goods within hours, rather than days.

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<sup>26</sup> Leith Anderson, 131.

Suburban grocery chains now remain open 24 hours a day, and with the advent of microwave we can cook fully-prepared full-course meals. For those who don't want to hassle shopping in a grocery store, we can pick up our meals at a fast food restaurant. Should we discover--on the way to our fast food outlet--that we are short of cash, automatic teller machines within seconds put cash in our hands.

The whole of our popular culture is centered on feeding our growing impatience and shortened attention spans, with television the primary conveyor of those images which sustain this culture. It also serves as the symbolic icon of this age.

Our primary religious, social, and political images are no longer primarily taken from a printed page, but framed by the boundaries of a screen. Whether cable television, VCR, or computer, our eye and attention go immediately to this source of information and entertainment. Very few people in our culture today can even pass through a room with a television going without first checking to see what it is showing. Many a family conversation is put on hold until a program is over. In some instances, commercial breaks are even more inviting to holding attention, since they are offered in short bytes, thus feeding into our encoded shortened attention spans.

Television news has refined the art of sound bytes, which has been duplicated in modern print journalism by such newspapers as USA Today. The paper does not provide in-depth coverage of a story, but a more elliptical survey of stories. Its distinctive vending boxes are made to resemble television screens. One more example of the cycle of our society's habit of hurry, its penchant to be entertained, and its short-term concentration level.

What is apparent to cultural observers like Kenneth Myers is since the 1960s

the aesthetics of popular culture have effectively displaced those of high culture.... It was once generally recognized by the custodians of culture (including artists, teachers, and preachers) that popular culture was an inferior form. Popular culture was seen as something fleeting and disposable.... High culture once served (at least for those with some education)

as a point of reference for the enjoyment of popular culture. It is now almost unknown.<sup>27</sup>

If oldline churches are going to relate at all to this post-print era, we need to take a serious look at these changes and evaluate how effective our traditional tools for worship, education, and mission are in relation to a dominating popular culture.

### Classical, Popular, and Contemporary Christian Music

Consider the cultural environment which the oldline church assumes as normative. We have held to a traditional high culture view of the world. To that end we have typically viewed music in worship as extremely important. Our hymnals, for the most part, represent what we consider to be the classics of our faith; Luther, Watts, the Wesleys, are generously represented along with the hymns of writers schooled in their tradition.

In the free church tradition every congregation holds its own view as to what is best suited for worship. By and large, hymns must be intelligible and familiar, and bear direct witness to the gospel and to faith which is the domain of language, even in song.

While understanding language and understanding music may function at two differing levels, it is useful to briefly distinguish between form and content. Church musician and teacher Calvin Johansson is of the belief that in and of itself, musical form can be described on several different levels: elements of

a musical work, the melodies, harmonies, textures, rhythms and so on; the emotional impact of music; the beauty resulting from formal organization;...the "vision" of the artist; and the intuitive idea (musical or otherwise) of a work. Everything that is communicated to the listener by the musical work has some validity when we try to describe what in the end is indescribable in words.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Myers, 72-73.

<sup>28</sup> Calvin Johansson, Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 37.

Lovelace and Rice speak of the music form as having an affinity to language, and that both share the impulse to give voice to feelings and to express thoughts.

Plainsong and the chant are merely heightened speech, making use of the rising and falling inflections of the words themselves to provide the melodic line. The use of high and low pitches heightens the emotional impact of words, and the timbre or quality of the voice in speech- which changes with varying emotions- is merely sustained or dramatized in song. Excitement in speech finds its counterpart in quicker tempos in music.<sup>29</sup>

The content of a hymn is that which is embodied in the lyric. At times it will take scripture directly and set it to music; other times scripture will be paraphrased, put into any number of poetic forms. Other times the lyric is narrative and describes an issue for faith, or is a confession offered in an individual or corporate frame of reference. The lyric content of the hymn may follow a pattern of instruction, constitute a prayer, ascribe affirmation to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or define a principle of theology.

In writing the introduction to Our Lives Be Praise, Erik Routley had this to say as to why one writes hymns:

Why? For the same reason that anyone else writes music. But the hymn tune writer is a kind of folk artist, just as the hymn text writer is a kind of ballad writer. The "folk" they have in mind, however, are neither those ancient peasants for whom we suppose "folk song" to have been composed.... No, the hymn writer writes for very ordinary people who are not necessarily musical or theologically-minded but who share the Christian Faith. As John Wesley said of writing for children: Either you try to go down to what you believe to be their level (he said Watts did that), or you try to share a vision that brings them towards yours.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice, Music and Worship in the Church, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 19.

<sup>30</sup> Erik Routley, introduction to Our Lives Be Praise (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1990), x.



In the preface to yet another work based on the study of forty-nine most commonly sung hymns,

Routley says:

It will be found that the papers that follow form a conspectus of Christian belief which...covers the whole of the credal country. Without straining the texts by an inch it has been possible to say something about all the cardinal doctrines of the Church. That is to say, our normal canon of popular hymns does really provide all the cardinal doctrines of Christendom.<sup>31</sup>

This would be the foundation upon which to define the classic hymn in Christian hymnody. Our hymn texts provide coverage to the full scope of Christian doctrine and belief, while musically they are drawn from tunes reflective of classical music construction and progression.

Popular culture has bequeathed an entirely different musical genre--rock and roll. Without question, rock is a dominant musical idiom in popular culture. To validate that assumption, one need merely inquire of any major radio market survey which stations have the highest listener share. Today 80 to 85 per cent will be comprised of popular rock and roll or country western music. In no major market survey will classical music register more than a 5 per cent radio audience listener share.

Rock and roll and country western share similar roots in the American blues and gospel rhythms. Country western also has roots to the American folk music idiom, and is more accustomed to an acoustical guitar, while rock and roll is heavily amplified. Each today rely upon a variety of electronic instrumentation including keyboards, drums, and stringed instruments. They tend to far more distinctive in lyric as country western is based upon a narrative story line, where rock and roll is far more minimalist. The lyric and musical harmonizations drive country western, while rock derives its power from its driving beat and repetitive music line.

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<sup>31</sup> Erik Routley, Hymns and the Faith (London: Murray Publishers, 1955), 2.

Not only is rock-and-roll's influence predominant on radio, it's preeminent in movie soundtracks, television advertising, and commercial Muzak offerings in public gathering places. The 1992 Democratic Convention highlighted a rock classic as its musical theme song—"Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow."

Allan Bloom, in The Closing of the American Mind, was particularly passionate in describing this cultural shift away from the music of high culture.

Classical music is dead among the young. This assertion will, I know, be hotly disputed by many who, unwilling to admit tidal changes, can point to the proliferation on campuses of classes in classical music appreciation and practice, as well as performance groups of all kinds. Their presence is undeniable, but they involve not more than 5 to 10 percent of the students. Classical music is now a special taste, like Greek language or pre-Columbian archeology, not a common culture of reciprocal communication and psychological shorthand. Thirty years ago, most middle class families made some of the old European music a part of the home, partly because they liked it, partly because they thought it was good for the kids.... But all that has changed. Rock music is as unquestioned and unproblematic as the air the students breathe, and very few have any acquaintance at all with classical music.<sup>32</sup>

For perspective it is well to recall that popular music has been a factor in culture long before rock and roll. Luther was disposed to use contrafacta— putting religious words to secular tunes. Some musicians will argue that in the sixteenth century there was a stylistic unity between the various genres of music which does not today exist. In other words, church songs based on Gregorian chant shared similar musical traits to what was then considered popular song. The musical bridge between the secular and sacred had no severe boundaries, and one was as likely to compose in one genre as the other.

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<sup>32</sup> Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 69.

In classical song, there is the assumption that it functions as a "unity of words and music," and that aesthetically it is treated as an art form.<sup>33</sup> Popular song, as Johansson contends, has several distinctive traits which isolates it from traditional art forms. Summarized, these traits include:

- it is an item of quantity. The object is produced with shortcut techniques, resulting in great profusion. It is manufactured wholesale.
- is big business, run by the methods and technology of big business for the sake of huge financial rewards.
- has an incredible drive toward continuous novelty. Durability and depth are not characteristics of its products.
- appeases the need for immediate gratification by offering tried and true musical conventionalities.
- seeks fun and amusement at the expense of beauty, thus by-passing the intellect. The lowest standard becomes the norm.
- is success-oriented, meaning its effectiveness is measured not in abstract, cognitive fashion; rather, success is measured in numbers and money. Thus, it becomes what is safe and unprovocative.
- creates an environment inhospitable to quality, since the "artist's" role is to find a comfortable berth or acceptance.
- is the epitome of transience, since to be popular is to affirm expendability.<sup>34</sup>

While this analysis comports with the views of other observers of the popular music scene, it is limited in its assuming that there are no serious artists at work within the popular idiom, and that the more commercial environment is incompatible with the creation of an effective and meaningful contemporary hymn. It is a further limitation upon the preceding analysis to assume that expectations of

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<sup>33</sup> Johansson, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Johansson, 51-53.

quality within the music derived from popular culture are non-existent. Might it be allowed that there are different standards? As one example, modern technological advances in sound reproduction have been a by-product of the environment of popular culture. Most people today have home stereo systems that far exceed in quality what the Beatles recorded upon. That classical music can be enjoyed at home listening to a CD recording is the result of a technology honed in the experimental venue of rock concerts and studio recording mixing rooms.

Classical music as an expression of beauty found its aesthetic foundation of the interplay between performer, the music, and the audience. Modernity has added a technological mix in which microphones, sound systems, equalizers, and visual performance components flesh out the artistic environment. There are numerous technological artists who today correspond to the more classic artist in that what is paramount in the art form is not merely getting the work popular recognition, but solely to get the creative work done.

The commercialism which Johansson so distrusts can be seen in quite another light.

This commercialism has not been altogether negative. Under some circumstances, it can support the creation of Christian music very effectively by bringing in enough cash to support the people who create it. It is instructive to look through one of our modern eclectic hymnals to see how many of the texts and tunes can be traced back to professional poets and composers- that is, to persons who wrote music or poetry for a living. In fact, Christian pastors created far more of our hymnody than did the professionals.... In the past, the churches subsidized much Christian music by encouraging its pastors and church musicians to create it. Today, the media may well be the leading patron of this art.

One result is that many people now create Christian music primarily to make a living, rather than out of the necessity of their own spiritual lives.<sup>35</sup>

One of the more obvious characteristics of popular music is its entertainment value. Some critics will contend that good taste is the victim of a popular music which aims at pleasing and satisfying its consumers. To that end, the economics of popular culture assumes that it "seeks not to encourage reflection, criticism, or discrimination, but to reduce as many serious issues as possible to the level of entertainment."<sup>36</sup>

That is not the view taken by Rev. Walt Kallestad, Senior Minister of the Community Church of Joy (ELCA) of Glendale, Arizona, who has developed a strategy for mission and church growth which he calls "Entertainment Evangelism." Kallestad begins with a definition of entertainment drawn directly from Webster that includes such components as "to show hospitality, to receive and care for guests, to capture and hold one's attention for an extended period of time."<sup>37</sup> Kallestad says that by using the medium of entertainment, the church is able to get people's attention long enough to present them with the Gospel. "We do not change the message, we change the method...we do not change the substance, we change the style."<sup>38</sup> What Kallestad and similar advocates are pointing toward is another dimension to the cultural register with which the modern church must contend: making faith relevant. Where Postman accurately posits amusement as a disengagement of persons and culture from the realities and responsibilities of a deepened discourse, Kallestad claims for entertainment a role in deepening religious discourse.

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<sup>35</sup> Jack Coogan, "Untangling Contemporary Christian Music," faculty paper, School of Theology at Claremont, n.d., 2.

<sup>36</sup> F. J. Glendenning, The Church and the Arts (London: SCM Press, 1960), 24.

<sup>37</sup> Walter P. Kallestad, Entertainment Evangelism, (Tempe, Ariz.: Fellowship Ministries, 1991), video discussion guide, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Kallestad, 5.

In an article several years ago on the emerging phenomena of modern Christian pop, music critic Chris Willman drew upon two revealing analyses from within the contemporary Christian music movement itself. He first quotes John Styll, publisher and editor of Contemporary Christian Magazine, over the issue of the church's alleged sanctifying popular music by merely adding religious words to popular musical idiom. Styll is quoted as saying:

In reality it's an attempt by Christians to influence popular culture rather than appropriate it for their use. It's a way to meld popular culture with biblical values by speaking the musical language of the day. What Amy Grant is saying when she sings "Love of Another Kind"- "They say love brings hurt, I say love brings healing"- represents a counterculture, not a subculture.<sup>39</sup>

Willman in a later segment of the same article raises the issue of whether religious pop music's gospel message suffers a danger of becoming watered-down in order to gain acceptance within the pop mainstream. In response, Melissa Helm, a marketing executive for Word, Inc., offers the view that

Christian music is getting closer and closer to being relevant to where people...are living. You now have songs that about pain and death and divorce and sex and relationships and everything that every one of us goes through, whereas at one time contemporary Christian music only talked about the death and resurrection of Christ. We're much more in touch with ourselves and our neighbors, which is the whole idea of Christ in the first place.<sup>40</sup>

How far afield from the view of Tillich is this observation? The presence of the Spirit in culture creates what Tillich calls a theonomy, which is the "directedness of the self-creation of life under the

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<sup>39</sup> Chris Willman, "Holy Rock is on a Roll," L.A. Weekly, 11-17 April, 1986, 43.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Willman, 44.

dimension of the Spirit toward the ultimate in being and meaning."<sup>41</sup> Theonomous culture expresses ultimacy and consecration; it affirms productivity and does not contradict the rational structure of the world nor suppress human freedom in it. These are significant and compatible components to the historic development of the hymn as it has progressed from lined psalm to Luther's hymns, from Watts' Christianizing of the Psalms to the Wesleyan hymn of passion to the gospel hymn of God's imminence. Ultimacy, consecration, freedom: marks of the Christian hymn in evolution.

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<sup>41</sup> Tillich, 248.

## Chapter 4

### God Makes All Things New

#### Church Data

An exploration of the contemporary Christian scene reveals a period of steady decline in membership among oldline churches, while non-traditional Protestant churches have experienced significant rates of increase. For example, the United Church of Christ claimed 2,241,000 members in 1960, but have dropped to 1,689,000 in 1990. During that same period of time, the Assemblies of God grew from 509,000 members to 2,478,000.<sup>1</sup> In the decade between 1980 and 1990, seven of the nine largest denominations experienced membership declines, including each one of the oldline traditions.

By contrast, the 1992 Barna Report, as quoted in the April 5, 1993 issue of Time Magazine, shows double and triple digit percentage increases among non-oldline churches. Southern Baptists show a net percentage increase in membership between 1965 and 1989 of 38 percent, Church of the Nazarene of 63 percent, Seventh Day Adventist of 92 percentage, Assemblies of God of 121 percentage, and Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) of 183 percent.<sup>2</sup> Dramatic growth has also been charted among churches which are clones of the Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, or the storefront Vineyard Christian Fellowship Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 280.

<sup>2</sup> Richard K. Ostling, "The Church Search," Time Magazine, 5 April 1993, 46-47.



### Praise Worship

In an attempt to gain some perspective on how some of these non-oldline churches incorporated congregational singing into their worship, I spent sixteen weeks visiting a number of these churches in San Diego County. Included in my itinerary were: Faith Chapel of La Mesa, Skyline Wesleyan of Lemon Grove, Scott Memorial Baptist (now Shadow Mountain Community) Church, Christian Faith Center of La Mesa, First Assembly of God of San Diego, Del Cerro Baptist Church, Horizon Christian Fellowship, and Valley Vineyard Fellowship. For contrast, I worshipped in several oldline congregations which were attempting to utilize contemporary music in congregational worship: First Congregational (U.C.C.) of Long Beach, Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church of El Cajon, and Foothills United Methodist Church. In addition, I visited two Roman Catholic churches with reputations for innovative music: St. Joseph's of Los Angeles (mariachi), and Christ the King of San Diego (Afro-American gospel).

What must be stated at the outset is that among the first set of churches there was a decidedly different format for worship. With the lone exception of Del Cerro Baptist, all others followed a Sunday morning worship pattern which is characterized as Praise Worship. There are two essential movements to this pattern: the first is presentational singing done by either a choir or small choral ensemble, transitioning into a sequence of congregationally sung choruses and hymns led by a song-leader. The choir or ensemble remains to augment the singing leadership. The second movement was the preaching service.

In the praise worship's first movement, there is always a song leader to instruct and guide the congregation's participation. With the lone exception of the Christian Faith Center, all worship and song leaders were male. At Faith Chapel, Christian Faith Center, Horizon Christian Fellowship, and Valley Vineyard Fellowship, worshipers are greeted by a performance ensemble who present a set of songs and musical pieces accompanied by either an orchestra (Faith Chapel) or a praise Band.

The praise band is typically comprised of electronic keyboard(s), synthesizer, lead guitar, bass guitar, and drums. Each vocalist uses a hand-held mike which is run off a master sound board, operated by a technician who is responsible for balancing the voices, and mixing voice with instrument. The simulation of being at a pop concert is intentional. All music was performed from memory, and offered in the informal manner of a pop concert.

Similarly, in each instance, one person spoke for the group and offered the transitional commentary and/or prayer between set pieces. It was quite common to encourage the congregation to either sing or clap along with them.

The praise worship strategy at Del Cerro Baptist, Scott Memorial, Skyline, and First Assembly differed in that worshipers were greeted by large choirs which filed into place and sang three to four hymns or choruses—by memory—until the song leader stepped forward to lead the congregation in a set of choruses and hymns, usually four to five in a set.

Typical for each of these settings was that this first movement's choreography also included prayers, greetings, announcements, and the concluding of the section with the singing of a traditional hymn, accompanied by organ, piano, and orchestras of 20 to 35 pieces.

The offertory in each setting served as a transition from first movement to second and, in all but one instance, the music was done by a vocal ensemble utilizing hand-held microphones, accompanied by praise band or orchestra. At Del Cerro Baptist, the offertory was a vocal soloist performing to a pre-recorded sound track.

The use of sound track was more commonly used in smaller worship environments, such as Valley Vineyard Fellowship. However, it must be stated that the use of the pre-recorded accompaniment tape is increasingly used in all the above mentioned churches.

One of the obvious impacts of the praise worship style is that it reveals a reliance upon a sophisticated sound system. Regardless of whether the church was large or small, its sound system was excellent, always balanced, and operated without a glitch.

A second characteristic of the praise worship format is its initial impression of greater informality, and of the popular concert venue. It intentionally seeks to create a distinct worship environment which is far removed from that which has long characterized oldline Protestant worship. This latter worship style has been defined by its reliance upon high culture and its artistry. The oldline traditions bear shadings of the concert hall, while the non-traditional bear markings of the rock concert stage; the former witnesses to a sense of awe, the latter to a sense of intimacy.

A third characteristic of praise worship is that the music which makes up the congregational singing portion of worship is more likely than not to be done off projections of lyric from either an overhead projector or a slide projector. In churches such as First Assembly, Del Cerro Baptist, Skyline, and Scott Memorial, giant screens drop from above the center of the chancel area (in these churches the area is referred to as a platform), upon which the images are cast. The experience which is created in this methodology has a useful effect upon the congregation. It leaves one with a greater sense of participating with a community in singing, not constrained by the parameters of hand-held hymnal or songsheet. Further, the directorial facility of the song leader is greatly enhanced, especially as it guides persons new to the music, or not at all musical. The use of this methodology is especially key to helping non-churched visitors feel at home, and is reflective of the contemporary user-friendly motif so much a part of contemporary popular culture. To reiterate, the theological theater in praise worship is directed toward that which is imminent, rather than that which is awe-inspiring.

In an article on putting together contemporary worship, Allan Mesko, worship pastor of an independent church in Little Rock, Arkansas, (averaging 2200 worshipers), writes of how he provides lyrics only rather than music to his congregation. He feels it helps them better understand the text.

In some hymns, for instance, the would-be worshiper sings the [grammatical] subject of a sentence at the end of one line, holds its note for four beats, takes a quick breath, and then sings the verb at the beginning of the next line. These lines of text, moreover, are sandwiched between other verses and bordered above and below by notes and staves, which make little sense to most of the congregation.... I've had many people over the years express this thought: "I've sung that hymn all my life, but I never understood what I was singing until today, when I saw the words in paragraph form, just like a newspaper or magazine."<sup>3</sup>

Among prominent contemporary hymn writers within the oldline church tradition such as Brian Wren, Erik Routley, Timothy Dudley-Smith and Shirley Erena Murray, the British method of printing music separate from lyric as poetry is born of exactly the same rationale as expressed by Mesko.

A fourth characteristic of praise worship music is its mnemnotic quality, a music which is a combination of easily-followed melody, basic chord progressions allowing for easily improvised harmonies, and rhythm patterns which do not conform to traditional strophic sequence. Much of the music allows for instrumental bridging, which is more consistent with popular music than with classical hymn form.

A fifth characteristic of this praise worship format is that the hymn/song is largely based upon psalm paraphrases, especially those which reflect images of the Lamb, of worthiness, and the kingship of God. The lyrics which have thus far emerged in much of contemporary Christian music can fairly be classified as patriarchal, militaristic, and hierarchical, which is why so much of it is unacceptable theologically to even the more traditional of oldline churches.

A final characteristic of the praise worship hymn is that it utilizes a style of pietistic language that is at once imminent and at the same time immediate. Just sampling titles from Worship Songs of

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<sup>3</sup> Allan Mesko, "Memorable Worship-It's Possible Every Week," Worship Leader, December/January 1993: 12.

Vineyard, Volume I yields: "Come Right Now," "Covered in Your Love," "Hold Me, Lord," "I'm In Love With You," "My Delight," "Sweet Perfume," and "Thank You For Being."<sup>4</sup>

Another linguistic style characterizing the contemporary hymn is the tendency to address God in a more personal and intimate fashion, the second person singular, thus limiting the venue of God in the realm of awe and transcendence, to one of intimate presence. "You Are Here," "You Are My Life," "You Are the Mighty King," "You Are the Vine," "You Have Given Me Hope," and "You Reign," are all drawn from the same collection of Vineyard hymns.<sup>5</sup>

The sum effect of visits to these first cluster of churches is to discover a worship style that is far removed from that of oldline traditions. As described by Robert Webber, the two contrasting styles represent genuine departures from one another.

The pedagogical style of worship was shaped by the 17th century model of the church as a school. In this model, worship is instruction and teaching, the handing over of information. It is a worship that stands in the tradition of Enlightenment.

The Evangelistic model of worship was shaped by the 19th century vision of the church as evangelical tent. The purpose is to worship in this model to save sinners. Get them to feel their "lostness," and turn to Jesus as their savior. The goal of worship is to feel one's forgiveness, to feel God in one's life. This approach to worship was shaped by the Romantic Movement.

With some modification, these models are still practiced today. The intellectual orientation of certain denominations result in pedagogical worship; the emotional dimension of other denominations results in evangelistic worship.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Worship Songs of the Vineyard, Volume I (Nashville: Benson Company, 1989), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Worship Songs of the Vineyard, Volume I, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Webber, "It's Time to Return Worship to the People Again," Worship Leader, August/September 1992, 10.

Webber's critique is useful, since he emerges as a critic from within the community of evangelicals that have given rise to contemporary Christian music. To his credit, Webber identifies how the modern communications revolution has so clearly affected evangelistic worship.

We boldly and unashamedly announce our secularized and passive concept of worship by referring to worship programs and by a language of platforms, audiences, and packages of music.

Here, then, are the Protestants of the 20th century, caught in the very same problem the Reformers died to deliver them from.... We want the drama to be played out "up there," on the platform. So we pay singers to express our spiritual struggles and preachers to re-enact the drama of salvation in their sermons.

Surveys tell us this is what people want. The felt need of the average church goer is to find a connection between God and everyday life.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most respected writers and workshop leaders in the church growth movement among non-traditional churches is Doug Murren. His book, The Baby Boomerang, is a carefully thought-out strategy on how to reach un-churched baby boomers. In it he has a chapter titled "Roll Over, Chuck Wesley," in which he identifies an eight point strategy for how hymns are selected and utilized in his church. Summarized, the eight points state:

1. We believe music- scores, as opposed to lyrics- is amoral.
2. ...music is a communicative tool and device for evangelism and outreach.
3. ...music is one of the clearest and most profound forms of worship expressions our human spirit can offer to God, who deserves the best, not mediocrity.
4. Truly heartfelt worship is in itself not only an expression of evangelism, but also of healing to our human spirit.

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<sup>7</sup> Webber, 10.

5. We believe music is a viable tool to allow our human spirit an opportunity to experience God's divine touch.
6. ...music in church should be of a quality and style comparable to that of the culture-at-large.
7. ...music in church shouldn't be very much different from the music that fills our everyday lives in order for it to communicate effectively.
8. ...music should be the balance of a vertical, God-related focus, and a horizontal ministry of comfort, exhortation, and evangelism.<sup>8</sup>

Is Murren a bit disingenuous when he suggests that music ought not offer distinctions from the culture at large? Would he truly embrace poor grammar, incoherent images, and the white noise of some of the music that occupies the most frequently listened to radio stations across the country as the best of what we can offer to God?

It is particularly interesting to note Murren's claim that inclusive worship demands an evaluation of the lyric to be sung. He offers two questions to be asked:

Are the lyrics simple enough so that firsttime visitors can join us?

Are the lyrics available in such a form that a first-time participant can be a part of the worship experience?<sup>9</sup>

If these are the sum total for criteria in selecting lyric, how can one be challenged, confronted, and converted by a faith that asks nothing more than my being a common denominator?

While our earlier models for hymn innovation relied to some extent upon contemporary musical devices and a fresh poetry, nonetheless they sought through their work to challenge, stretch, and save the mind and soul. As one bumper sticker a number of years ago stated, "Jesus died to take away our sins, not

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<sup>8</sup> Doug Murren, The Baby Boomerang (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1990), 194.

<sup>9</sup> Murren, 196.

our minds!" To be contemporary in our hymnody does not mean the loss of vitality in critical thinking or theological reflection.

How revealing that inclusive lyrics for Murren have nothing to do with issues of gender inclusiveness, nor physical inclusiveness, nor theological distinctions which mark the content of work from within a vast feminist, Green, and liberationist perspective. Is it this point of distinction that makes it doubly difficult for oldline churches to begin to make the transition from their hymns of awe and grace to contemporary hymns of praise? In truth, the hymns which make up the bulk of oldline hymnodies are no more inclusive than these contemporary counterparts. The irony is, of course, that in their day our beloved old hymns were once contemporary, conformed to current literary standards, and brought a fresh theological interpretation to the faith as it attempted to break free of the stultifying lined psalm.

Perhaps we have reached a point in the life of the church where the traditional boundaries of sacred versus secular are being breached. As has been suggested in the preceding chapters, musical developments in the evolution of the hymn have frequently taken place outside the mainstream of church influence, and have been assimilated with great reluctance.

#### Praxiological Extensions

What in-and-of itself constitutes a musical distinction between that which is sacred and that which is secular? Is it even possible to create a set of rules for making music sacred rather than secular, or popular? If the raw material of music (time and tone) is amoral, and the finished product cannot be determined sacred or secular, then it must simply be judged according to whether it is "interesting or dull, polyphonic or monophonic, accompanied or a cappella, and so on."<sup>10</sup> In the end, "sacred and secular are

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<sup>10</sup> Frank Tirro, "Choral Music," Choral Journal 7 (September/October 1967): 20.



not qualities of things; they are qualities of relationship orientation."<sup>11</sup> What brings sacredness to any work of art, be it painting or hymn, is the quality of relationship one brings to the art form. Thus, it could be held that Washington Gladden's "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee" is as sacred a hymn to one hearer, as is D. J. Butler's "I Will Change Your Name" to another. Let us look at these two contrasting lyrics:

O Master let me walk with thee  
In lowly paths of service free;  
Tell me thy secret, help me bear  
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move  
By some clear, winning word of love;  
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,  
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me thy patience; still with thee  
In closer, dearer company,  
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,  
In trust that triumphs over wrong.

In hope that sends a shining ray  
Far down the future's broadening way,  
In peace that only thou canst give,  
With thee, O Master, let me live.<sup>12</sup>

#### "I Will Change Your Name"

I will change your name,  
you shall no longer be called  
wounded,  
outcast,  
lonely or afraid.

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<sup>11</sup> Johansson, 64.

<sup>12</sup> Washington Gladden, "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee, Pilgrim Hymnal, (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), 418. Used by permission.

I will change your name,  
     your new name shall be  
             confidence,  
             joyfulness,  
             overcoming one,  
 faithfulness, friend of God, one who seeks My face.<sup>13</sup>

Washington Gladden wrote his lyric, in 1879, not as a hymn but as a poem for the devotional section in a religious magazine which he edited. Another person found the poem and made a hymn of it. Gladden himself was to say of the hymn version that "[it] had no liturgical purpose and no theological significance, but it was an honest cry of human need, of the need of divine companionship."<sup>14</sup>

That same urgency of divine companionship is revealed in Bulter's hymn lyric, although it was written strictly as a hymn and not as poetry. Its verbal style is one of familiarity, imminence, and points the singer toward God's activity. It is written as if the voice of God were speaking in a vertical God to self relationship, in contrast to Gladden's hymn which expresses a more horizontal relationship of self to others. Whereas Gladden's lyric identifies the Master, Butler relies upon the impression of God speaking to us in the first person as a means to evoke the sacred.

When considering the lyric of the more general genre of popular music it is all too apparent that much of it focuses on notions of love, especially romantic love. Danny Daniels uses this linguistic environment to frame his contemporary hymn, "I'm In Love With You."

I'm in love with You  
     for You have called me child.  
 I'm in love with You  
     for You have called me child.  
 You reached out and touched me,  
     You heard my lonely cry,

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<sup>13</sup> D. J. Butler, "I Will Change Your Name," Worship Songs of the Vineyard, Volume 2. (Nashville: Benson Co., 1989), 70. Used by permission of Music Services.

<sup>14</sup> Ronander and Porter, 323.

I will praise Your name forever,  
And give You all my life.<sup>15</sup>

This is not high-soaring poetry, and hardly lyric that evokes reflections of the well-crafted sort that flows from high culture poetry of hymn classics. But it does meet the requirements of a popular culture where high tech-low touch leaves far too many people feeling emotionally abandoned and spiritually orphaned. To countless thousands who have been the products of broken homes, abusive and dysfunctional family systems, have moved from community to community without having had time to establish roots, such simple lyrics when set to contemporary musical venues become the heart-music for persons in search of meaning. Personal, individualistic to the core; but culturally relevant.

No less a church musician than Joseph Gelineau reminds us that

[at] the pinnacle of the songs of human and divine love, we hear the voice of the beloved in the Song of Songs: 'Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field.' (Songs 7:11).... A voice governed the awakening of the soul. The soul entered into loving dialogue. It lost itself in it. But it was in order to find itself truly in the Loved One. This appears to us to be the path of music for humanity captivated by the voice of the Other Being.<sup>16</sup>

Gelineau continues on to observe that in the history of Christian worship it is music which has always been most subject to change because it is most immediately affected by cultural changes. The hymn, nonetheless, in order to be fully the music of the church

must be fully ours, therefore the only "contemporary" music indicated here being that which the enlightened practitioners judge to be so. Today we can only have liturgical music worthy of esteem if the Church finally opens itself up to this music.

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<sup>15</sup> Danny Daniels, "I'm in Love With You," Worship Songs of the Vineyard, Volume 1 (Nashville: Benson Co., 1989), 66. Used by permission of Music Services.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Gelineau, "The Path of Music," Music and the Experience of God, eds. Mary Collins, David Powers, and Melonee Burnim, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1989), 135.

If we restrict contemporary music merely to cultured Western music post-Schoenberg, which deliberately distances itself from the common musical language of our contemporaries, then we enclose the liturgy within an esotericism reserved for the very small culturally elite. The usual response is that the music for the elite today will be the popular music of tomorrow. But nothing could be less sure in the present circumstances.

On the other hand, contemporary music can be a privileged area for spiritual experience and can open new paths toward God even for people who have no taste for the present liturgy.<sup>17</sup>

Gelineau translates well into the present-day American religious scene, and underscores what theologians and worship designers outside the oldline churches have been emphasizing.

Although he is liturgically at an entirely different end of the spectrum, Doug Murren summarizes in an advocacy for popular music that we are, by nature, adventurous in the styles of music we employ:

I am committed to making certain that our music expresses God's predisposition to our creativity and the need to present Christianity as a journey and a pilgrim age, as well as a relevant message for all times.<sup>18</sup>

The data developed by the Gallop and Barna Research groups each reflect that where non-traditional churches are growing most effectively is among baby boomers and baby busters (also called Thirteeners), the rock-solid core of popular culture. Recognizing the demographic challenge, and anticipating the cultural tools by which that segment of our society can be reached, many of these churches have carefully orchestrated the incorporation of contemporary hymns in contemporary format into the worship setting. In other words, their evangelical strategy is encompassed in ways by which congregational singing is understood as integral to that task. This is an important dimension with which

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<sup>17</sup> Gelineau, 145.

<sup>18</sup> Murren, 209.

oldline churches ought to wrestle, especially in light of an expressed concern for evangelism and church growth among the very generation that it has seen leave in large numbers.

### Oldline Challenge

The truth is there has been a great abundance of contemporary music produced by writers within the oldline traditions in the past twenty years. Brian Wren, Tom Hunter, Susan Savelle, Jim and Jean Strathdee, Jim Manley, Ron Klusmeier, Dan Damon, and Ruth Sandberg are but a few of the spiritual poets and musicians hard at work fashioning a contemporary hymn for today's church. Their music will not, however, be found in great abundance within the more recent collections published for oldline churches. They do, however, fill the summer church camp songbooks, where they are becoming a cherished part of the camping experience for children and youth.

These hymns are—as a rule—not written as simple praise songs. They are what might be termed fifth gospel renderings. By this it is meant that the lyric seeks to address holistic living by virtue of a language that is much more overt in its sensitivities to emerging theologies of liberation, justice, and wholeness. Such lyric tends to be much more narrative of faith than its gospel counterpart. It utilizes a musical form and structure that is far more difficult for untrained singers to perform.

Consider, for example, Brian Wren's "Great Lover, Calling Us To Share."

Great Lover, calling us to share  
     your joy in all created things,  
     from atom-dance to eagles' wings,  
 we come and go, to praise and care.

Though sure of resurrection-grace,  
     we ache for all earth's troubled lands  
     and hold the planet in our hands,  
 a fragile, unprotected place.

Your questing Spirit longs to gain  
     no simple fishing-ground for souls,  
     but as life's story onward rolls,  
 a world more joyful and humane.

As midwives who assist at birth,  
     we give our utmost, yet grieve  
     lest folly, greed or hate should leave  
 a spoiled, aborted, barren earth.

Self-giving Lover, since you dare  
     to join us in our history,  
     embracing all our destiny,  
 we'll come and go with praise and care.<sup>19</sup>

When compared to Danny Daniel's "I'm In Love With You," Wren's lyric is enormously more graphic, compelling, and re-sounding in multiple theological implications. The former identifies God solely as "You." The latter identifies God in at least three motifs—Great Lover, questing Spirit, and midwife. These are not mnemonic devices easily put to simple song. They are theologically profound assertions and guideposts to relevant Christian issues; but they lose relevance when put to music which is largely unsingable for untrained American congregations.

One is reminded of the line from the film Amadeus when the patron king (played by Jeffrey Jones) first heard a commissioned work from protegee Mozart and responded, "Too many notes!"<sup>20</sup> Too many words might characterize the narrative poetic style of writers of contemporary hymns from within the oldline tradition.

In defense of this style, it must be said that there is an intellectual side to religion that is often mistrusted by popular culture and thought of either incidental or a necessary evil.

Particularly in evangelical Christianity, where emotion is thought of as primary, there are covert and sometimes overt moves to discredit the mind.... However, encounter with God is always accompanied by intellectual activity.... If the intellectual activity is omitted, even minimally, a distorted picture of God's revelation to [us] results.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Brian Wren, "Great Lover, Calling Us To Share," Bring Many Names (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1989), 17. Used by permission.

<sup>20</sup> Milos Forman, dir., Amadeus, with F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce, Republic Pictures, 1984.

<sup>21</sup> Johansson, 65.

Much of the focus for contemporary hymn writers within the oldline tradition has been upon the intellectual task of revisioning God and the theological implications of the language we use. This is a task which I advocate, indeed participate in myself. We must avoid with diligence what Gelineau identified as an esotericism reserved for a very small cultural elite. Popular culture depends upon lowest common denominators and novelty, not necessarily informed principles or high standards.

Sing Praise, Sing Free, Sing for Joy

In response to a request for original hymns for the ordination of a seminary classmate, I wrote the lyric and music for two separate pieces. The first, "Sing Praise, Sing Free, Sing for Joy" (see Appendix H) was written as an entrance hymn, intended to evoke images appropriate for a woman being ordained to ministry, as well as to the roots of a traditional faith. The martial tone of the music is off-set by a language which attempts to soften it. The repetition of "Sing Praise! Sing Free! Sing for Joy!" as a closing chorus is a modified version of the gospel chorus.

O God we sing of joy!  
 For love that knows no bounds:  
     Love that comes dancing,  
     Moanful and weeping,  
     Full of the pains of birth and dying,  
     Yet still rising!  
 Sing praise! Sing free! Sing for joy!

Why are we gathered here,  
 A people unto God?  
     Creation springs alive,  
     Free, without compromise;  
     We share a sacred pride in Christ,  
     The Good News raises!  
 Sing praise! Sing free! Sing for joy!

We lift our eyes to see  
 God's grace in little things.  
     Here comes the morning sun;  
     Warm touches everyone.  
     God etches night with light  
     The promise of our rising!  
 Sing praise! Sing free! Sing for joy!

O Christ, at times our world  
 Cries out its mournful soul.  
     Bend low your ear to hear,  
     Renew us from our fears,  
     Give us your presence near  
     Such healing Life surprises!  
 Sing praise! Sing free! Sing for joy!

Bless this our tie that binds  
 Us in the mind of God.  
     Behold God's gentle face  
     In-spiriting this place;  
     Christ sets us free to trace  
     The New Life resurrecting!  
 Sing praise! Sing free! Sing for joy!

The second hymn, "God Makes All Things New," (see Appendix I) was written to be used as a hymn of consecration. Joining together images from Isa. 44:3-4 with the promise of a New Creation as proclaimed in Rev. 21:1-6, I attempted to evoke through the lyric patterns that were nurturing and tended to celebrate the gifts of women in ministry. I further chose to cast the music in 3/4 time, to signal a departure from the more masculine martial meter found in 4/4 time.

Our God has said, "Behold I make all things new;  
 I shall forgive your sins, and shall rejoice,  
     and shall rejoice in all I do.  
 No longer weep nor mourn, fear growing old,  
     or helpless like a child of two,  
 For I make all things new.

Just like a mother shall I give comfort;  
 I'll nurture and carry you, celebrate your joys,  
     and share with you the hurting tears.  
 So I will comfort you; I who gave you birth  
     shall not turn away from you.  
 For I make all things new."

Rejoice, be glad, for God has borne us out of joy;  
 Gave birth within this soul, the labor is not vain,  
     Bless'd is the child again!  
 Servants, we take the cue, mirrors to hope,  
     An offering to human view.  
 Our God makes all things new.



This latter hymn puts the first two verses into a narrative spoken in the first person singular, recognized as God. The attempt is to fashion a lyric that offers an imminent presence that is recognized in parenting skills. The person for whom this text was written was herself a single parent. In a culture where there are increasing numbers of single parents, it seemed necessary to convey through hymn a recognition that God can create all things new, given our human limitations and brokenness.

Two additional hymns which I wrote for separate worship events, serve also as an opening to worship and a hymn of consecration. In "Sing Alleluia To the Lord" (see Appendix J) the repetitive chorus comes at the opening of the hymn, and is from a fragment to whose original musical authorship I cannot attest. Nonetheless, it is written to be a spirited and rousing call to worship, with the verses implying a deep ecology of praise.

Sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia,  
sing Alleluia to the Lord!  
Sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia,  
sing Alleluia to the Lord!

Here we greet the day made for prayer and song,  
Singing as one voice in an anthem strong.  
Celebrate the love Jesus brought to life,  
Known as God's great gift, a song from Heaven's heart.

[Refrain]

Elements that bind nature with a soul,  
Draw upon the One who has named it whole.  
So creation sounds lasting songs of praise  
Sung as tribute to the Maker's loving ways.

[Refrain]

Would that rain, like air, be ever sweet to breathe,  
While dolphins' endless play entwine a kindred wreath.  
All creation's soul the Holy Presence gives  
Affirmations strong: What is remembered, lives!

In "Live the Vision, Share the Dream" (see Appendix K) the lyric works off of the meanings which a community finds in encountering the Word of God through the promptings of our liturgy. A mini refrain appears in each verse to lead the congregation to its inevitable conclusion in consecration.

With the gift of Peace,  
     our time to go has neared.  
 Comes the call to be disciples  
     to a world in tears.  
 It is Christ whose work we share:  
     Word of God our burdens bear!  
 Live the vision and share the dream,  
     an everflowing stream.

With the gift of Prayer,  
     our doubts and fears are heard.  
 Comes the chance to offer others  
     reconciling words.  
 See the lion and the lamb:  
     Word of God brings Peace at hand!  
 Live the vision and share the dream,  
     reconciled, made free.

With the gift of Bread,  
     our lives are broken wide.  
 Comes the time to pass the cup,  
     reflections deep inside.  
 We are kneaded as the grain:  
     Word of God is raised again!  
 Live the vision and share the dream,  
     broken, healed, redeemed.

With the gift of Song,  
     our time of worship ends.  
 Comes the time to greet each other  
     off'ring, "Peace, my friends."  
 Seeds have fallen, planted deep:  
     Word of God its harvest reap!  
 Live the vision and share the dream,  
     love's song now complete!

#### Issues at Stake

It seems that we have arrived at a point where it is possible to raise some questions which point us toward the present and future tasks of helping congregations embrace new hymns within an oldline faith. To what extent is the evangelical task dependent upon worship and the music that is part of the worship environment? Is the integrity of worship diminished when innovative, contemporary styles of music are incorporated into the worship scheme? To what extent ought contemporary hymnody be

directed by theological concerns alone, or to what extent ought it be allowed to be shaped by the influences of popular culture? To what degree can contemporary hymnody be shaped by emerging new theologies and still accommodate popular musical forms without compromising the integrity of faith?

These are the questions with which local church pastors and local church music committees can struggle. They are also questions which deeply affect the whole of the church, for our hymns continue to reveal new understandings of God. They introduce us to the church's language by which to deepen and broaden our understanding of Christian life and witness. They continue to be the repositories of linguistic metaphors for God, and the working of God in the world.

Given the various cohorts which provide a demographic profile to the relative strength or weakness of its evangelical mission, there seems to be a plausible correlation between the past decade's rapid growth of non-traditional churches and their incorporation of contemporary music into their worship forms. Similarly, oldline churches utilizing a predominantly traditional hymnody based upon European musical standards of the nineteenth century and earlier, are either in decline or showing no appreciable growth.

It has been the advocacy of this project that it is possible to blend a theologically rich hymn lyric with a contemporary musical setting, which could help create an overall worship environment to appeal to unchurched people today. In fact, it is nothing new, but a continuation of the Protestant development of its hymnody as born witness to by Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, John and Charles Wesley, and Ira Sankey.

There have been periods throughout our Christian heritage when worship was deemed boring, uninspired, and irrelevant. Each of those periods was eventually overcome in a wave of reforming enthusiasm, and it was in the hymns that the new directions were first signalled. We are capable of using a rich and inclusive language, while addressing the experiential musical needs of people are telling us that much of what they find in oldline worship is wanting, archaic, and boring. The hymnody we use is a place where people can discover, improve, and utilize the theological dimensions of their musical action.

People who are invigorated in their faith sing, and sing well because they know they have something to sing about. This music of the invigorated is firmly planted in the realities of this world, its cultural expressions, its sufferings and joys, its God-given demands, and transformed by the boundless imagination and creativity of poets and composers who proclaim Good News.

## CHAPTER 5

### Here Is Our Mission

#### Creativity and Communication

Creativity is generally thought to be a major component of our likeness to God, drawing upon an inference from Gen. 1:26. Human creativity finds its expression in magnificent ways: through social constructs, in the imagination of technologies, and by way of the various art forms. In each instance there is an opportunity for both self expression and for communal expression. Nowhere is this expression more apparent than through that of religious faith. Whether through the unique architectural form which encases a place of worship, the utilization of paintings and icons, the playing of instruments and singing, or the choreography of worship participants, each are creative expressions of people telling their stories, speaking of their pain, their joys, and giving witness to a faith that offers them hope and courage.

It follows that when people express themselves, they are devising a means of communication. Thus, religion and art share common ground. Thomas Martland holds that they are each human enterprises by which individuals and communities deal with their experiences, each providing a vision and standards by which to measure all human experience. As Martland writes.

What distinctively marks art and religion is not their serving things past, but their providing necessary equipment to move into the future.... Thus, what makes certain activities artistic or religious is the way they are used, what they do. We take them as patterns of meaning, frames of perception, or paradigms, by which we interpret our experiences and draw conclusions about the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Martland, Religion as Art (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 6.

In a response to Martland, Wilson Yates has added three points of commonality between theology and the arts which are applicable to this project. Summarized, these are: (1) the unity of each comes as a result of creative imagination; (2) each shares common artistic elements such as mythic language, evocative symbols, metaphor, image, narrative, and an awareness of the dramatic moment; and (3) each engage in the presentation of images, frames of perception, and patterns of meaning.<sup>2</sup>

The hymn as part of a worshiping experience creates a communication dynamic in which people interpret those images, patterns of meaning, and frames of reference offered by the author/composer, and add to them their own. The question then becomes twofold: do those images, patterns of meaning, and frames of reference become understood by individuals and congregations anywhere near what the author/composer intended? What is brought to the hymn's content from an individual's or congregation's own background?

The original composition of hymns that are contained in our denominational hymnals are the products of a particular renewal experience within our respective churches at a particular time. Whether drawn from the Reformation music of Martin Luther, the post-Puritan era of Isaac Watts, the Wesleyan renewal era, the revival period of Moody/Sankey, or even the more recent post-Vatican II era, creativity in Christian hymn writing has most often sprung from those periods in which some form of renewal was being called forth; a new way of saying what has been a timeless truth, or belief, or tenet of faith. The language coming out of each and any of those eras is image specific, its frames of perception and patterns of meaning contemporary to the time of its authorship. Just as significant are the musical forms which conform to the contemporary standards for each era in which the hymn was written.

Many nineteenth century hymns, for example, featured a common theme of the blood of Christ. To sing "There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood" was to evoke an image that could be appropriated by a

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<sup>2</sup> Wilson Yates, The Arts in Theological Education (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 101-02.

nineteenth century culture familiar with the butchering of livestock. Part of the dressing of fowl, pork, and beef required rinsing in a tub or "fountain" of water. The pattern of meaning presented in that lyric evoked a vivid one in the meaning of salvation through the sacrificial blood of Jesus. Today, as the vast majority of American culture validates the picking of its beef, pork and poultry from pre-packaged shelves at the supermarket, the image fails to convey as effectively the message of salvation as it could a century ago. Now it stands as an image that signifies an out-of-datedness to the church, even irrelevance.

Today, the message of salvation requires a contemporary context relevant to the near twenty-first century. The cultural forms of one era will not always convey the same meaning to another. Obviously, some hymns transcend time and culture, and they remain an important and beloved part of our experience and of the communication of our faith.

What follows are some resources developed in pursuit of this project to which worship leaders and music personnel within oldline churches might go to begin the building of their own resource file. These will be categorized resources in which contemporary hymns may well assist the creative process of communicating and experiencing the Christian faith.

#### New Lyric-Old Tunes

Practically every denominational hymnal contains certain data which can be of great use to persons who are not musically trained, but wish to contemporize the hymns which they offer a congregation. First among the data is the metrical index which groups hymn tunes according to a metrical designation. A meter is the rhythmic pattern of a verse, measured by the syllabic emphasis in each phrase, depending upon stress patterns.

Take, for example, the verse of the hymn "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." The first phrase contains six beats: Blest' be' the' tie' that' binds'. The second phrase also contains six beats: Our' hearts' in'

Christ'-ian' love'. The third phrase expands to eight beats: The' fel'-low'-ship' of' kin'-dred' minds'; then concludes with a six beat phrase: Is' like' to' that' a'-bove'.

The metrical index will identify this hymn verse by tune according to that specific meter by assigning two qualifying signs: S. M. and 6.6.8.6., followed by the name of the tune Boylston. S. M. is the insignia for standard meter, while the numerical 6.6.8.6. simply identifies the actual meter of the verse.

Theoretically, any S. M. hymn ought to have its verse inter-changeable with any other S. M. hymn. The same would hold true for other standard metrical settings, making it possible to match lyric with hymn tune.

Certain standard metrical groupings appear in most hymnals: Short Meter (S.M. 6.6.8.6.), Short Meter Double (6.6.8.6.D), Common Meter (C.M. 8.6.8.6.), Common Meter Double (8.6.8.6.D), Long Meter (L.M. 8.8.8.8.), Long Meter Double (8.8.8.8.D). Then will follow clusters of other metrical groupings such as the 7.6.7.6., 7.6.7.6.D with refrain, 7.7.7.7., 7.7.7.7. with Alleluias, 8.7.8.7., 8.7.8.7.D, 10.10.10.10., 11.10.11.10, and a host of meters identified as Irregular.

For the beginning step in applying a practical use of the metrical index, consider Tallis' Canon, written in the sixteenth century by Thomas Tallis (see Appendix L). It most commonly appears in hymnals with lyric composed by Bishop Thomas Ken, "All Praise to Thee, My God."

All praise to thee, my God, this night,  
For all the blessings of the light!  
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,  
Beneath thine own almighty wings!

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,  
The ill that I this day have done,  
That with the world, myself, and thee,  
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

O may my soul on thee repose,  
And with sweet sleep mine eyelids close,  
Sleep that may me more vig'rous make  
To serve my God when I awake.



Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
 Praise him, all creatures here below;  
 Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.<sup>3</sup>

Ken wrote a trilogy of hymns for boys to sing every morning, noon, and evening with "All Praise To Thee, O God," written as the evening hymn. It incorporates praise, help in righteous living, and request for restful sleeping as themes for the first three verses, the last being the well-known "Doxology." In The Gospel in Hymns, Albert Edward Bailey commented that "One might say that the thoughts are rather morbid for youngsters to entertain every night; but then, we live in a different age."<sup>4</sup>

The tune is quite familiar to most oldline congregations, but note Bailey's observation of 43 years ago that even then the lyric was dated? Jane Parker Huber in 1982 wrote a four stanza hymn verse, "The Peace of Mind That Christ Can Bring," that fits perfectly into Tallis' Canon, L. M.

The peace of mind that Christ can bring  
 Is peace in knowing how to sing  
 In spite of doubts of why or how,  
 In spite of fears of here and now.

The peace that strengthens faithful souls  
 Cannot be built on self-made goals,  
 But rather comes to those who heed  
 A call for help in time of need.

So one finds peace within the heart  
 When each with other bears a part.  
 When peace for me is peace for you,  
 Then Christ is present, peace is true.

So Christ, invade our life and will  
 Until we see Your justice still  
 Defining best all human worth,

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Ken, "All Praise to Thee, My God," Pilgrim Hymnal (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1958), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Bailey, 37.

### Re-shaping dreams of peace on earth.<sup>5</sup>

Each set of lyrics fit easily into this L. M., and stress features of each set of lyrics match. The richest contrast between these two sets of lyric is found in Ken's sense of awe and otherness of God: Huber's lyric weaves a more intimate and immanent relationship. When she speaks of "When peace for me is peace for you, then Christ is present, peace is true," the relationship becomes simultaneously horizontal and vertical, a realized immanence. The second contrast flows between Ken's stress upon God's initiating activity over against Huber's stress upon the human response. The former is more of a passive deterministic response, appropriate for the theology of his day. The second is more of an active, liberating movement which is an echo of theological themes heard in the latter twentieth century.

Browsing through the metrical index of any hymnal will surface numerous other tunes to which this lyric might be set. For example, "Duke Street," (see Appendix M), is most commonly identified with Isaac Watts' lyric "Jesus Shall Reign." Huber's lyric also works quite well with Duke Street.

Thus, the minister or church musician can draw from out of contemporary lyric collections the metrical pattern of that lyric, and then introduce that new lyric through familiar hymn tunes, thus avoiding the double task of learning entirely new music.

John Dalles' collection of fifty-two hymn texts, Come, O Spirit, includes notations of meter and suggested tunes for congregational singing. Among the fifty-two are six identified as L. M. Two of the six are written in rhyming couplets, which creates a definable rhythm that works better with some tunes than others. Again using either Tallis' Canon or Duke Street as a base tune, Dalles' celebration of creation, "God Formed the World And Called It Good," works superbly.

God formed the world and called it good-  
Each stream and flower; each field and wood;  
The heavens vast; the atom small;  
And fashioned us, God's children, all.

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<sup>5</sup> Jane Parker Huber, "The Peace of Mind That Christ Can Bring," Joy in Singing (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1982), 31. Used by permission.

God, fill Your church with songs of praise;  
 May we rejoice, give thanks always.  
 Our voices joined in harmony,  
 Offering heartfelt jubilee.

God, forge our fellowship above;  
 Link us by selfless acts of love.  
 Together may we ever be  
 A chain of mutual ministry.

God, send us to the world to serve;  
 Awake our souls, stretch every nerve.  
 Endow us in our time and place,  
 Making us stewards of Your grace.

God calls us, here we are to be  
 Harbingers of Eternity.  
 God calls us, here we are to share  
 Wonders of Christ's abundant care.<sup>6</sup>

Dalles' lyric suggests the inherent value found in all creation based upon God's creative activity, and points to the important affirmations of stewardship of which today's church is increasingly vocal. Some might question the dualism suggested in stanza three of fellowship above as being a dated and trite image. However, in his fourth stanza, Dalles employs a further technique as he writes "Awake our souls, stretch every nerve." That is, of course, taken from the lyric of Philip Doddridge's (1702-1751) "Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve." By employing a well-known phrase of another beloved hymn within the text of the new, it offers an additional sense of familiarity to an otherwise unknown lyric.

Among the more adaptable of hymn lyric resources today is that written by Lavon Bayler in her lectionary-based series of worship aids. Fresh Winds of the Spirit and Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book Two are designed for Year A; Whispers of God is designed for Year B; and, Refreshing Rains of the

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<sup>6</sup> John A. Dalles, "God Formed the World and Called It Good," Come, O Spirit (Brea, Calif.: Educational Ministries, 1992), 16. Used by permission.

Living Word is designed to fit Year C. Each volume contains worship resources appropriate to every Sunday of the year, including a complete section of related hymn texts, notated by metrical signature.

One sample hymn from Lavon Bayler is from the Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year A. Based upon the lection texts John 11:1-5, and Rom. 8:6-11, the text appears with the title "Celebrating Life,"

8.8.8.8.8.4.4.4. (L. M. with alleluias), tune LASST UNS ERFREUEN.

Because we are already given the hymn tune, a quick check of the Pilgrim Hymnal's Alphabetical Index of Tunes indicates that a version of Lasst Uns Erfreuen appears for three separate sets of lyric: number 12 is set to Isaac Watts' "From All That Dwell Below the Skies;" number 30 is set to Athelston Riley's (1858-1945) "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones;" and number 64 is set to St. Francis of Assisi's "All Creatures of Our God and King." Since all three hymn texts are quite familiar to most oldline congregations, the setting of new lyric to this familiar tune maintains an easy edge of familiarity. Thus, "Celebrating Life" by Lavon Bayler becomes very singable.

Come, all who follow Jesus' way;  
See God's surprises every day.  
Celebrating life abundant,  
Meet here the friend who conquers death.  
Welcome from God renewing breath,  
Singing praises, singing praises,  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Set not your minds on mortal things,  
Rather on peace the Spirit brings.  
Celebrating life abundant,  
Dare to be witnesses to light,  
Helping those stumbling in the night.  
Singing praises, singing praises.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Hear once again the Teacher's word,  
Letting your life by Christ be stirred.  
Celebrating life abundant,  
Join in the resurrection song,  
Freeing all people bound by wrong,

Singing praises, singing praises.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!<sup>7</sup>

Having been requested by the Stewardship Council of the United Church of Christ to write a hymn text to "some familiar tune," I set about the task of first identifying a complex of metrically similar tunes, to which I could then begin to write lyric. I settled on three which fit an 8.7.8.7.D meter. The Austrian hymn and Beecher were both familiar tunes that I felt could lend themselves to my task. Once I had a rough outline of my lyric, I then tried to adapt it to each of the tune settings. Neither were completely satisfying, so I turned to a third 8.7.8.7.D option, the tune Hyfrydol. It was a match. The hymn, "Here Is Our Mission," was sung at the opening worship to General Synod, Salem United Church of Christ, in Rochester, New York. It seeks to confirm the stewardship of covenantal commitments, the stewardship in creation, in history, and in proclamation.

Grant us, God, your willing servants  
Fresh new visions for our day.  
In the language of celebration  
This new covenant convey.  
You have traced in our dust a stirring of life,  
The patterns of mystery, clear!  
Here is our mission, beginning of vision:  
God, Creator of life, draws near.

Cast before us mountains rise  
Embraced by wisps of cotton blue skies.  
Through the meadows dance unspoiled waters,  
Fern and fawn their thirst satisfy.  
Taste of salt air that rides on ocean winds,  
Desert colors of day's hast'ning end.  
Here is our mission, before us a vision:  
Here, O steward, to God earth bends.

Threads of history weave the story  
Of those who weep for justice to come.  
Children of each race are crying  
For peace, that makes of earth a safe home.

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<sup>7</sup> Lavon Bayler, "Celebrating Life," Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book Two (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1992), 195. Used by permission.

Ever pilgrims, we catch the future,  
     A smile God gives us to act out in time.  
 Here is our mission, the living of vision:  
     Christ, our model, the call Divine.

Make us witnesses to the story  
     Of all that God would call us to be.  
 Co-creators with earth's resources  
     And co-redeemers in liberty.  
 From a Cross planted in earth's brokenness  
     Spread forth roots to be the New Day!  
 Here is our mission, proclaiming Christ's vision:  
     Life and future the steward's way!

This understanding of how the metrical index can be used to match new lyric with familiar tunes becomes a first step in radically reshaping our repertoire of hymns. There are a number of good resources available from contemporary writers of hymn texts who encourage creative musical uses of their hymns.

Notable among these resources are the works of Fred Kaan and of Fred Pratt Green. Kaan, born and raised in Holland, then ordained into the Windsor Road Congregational Church in Barry, South Wales, began very early in adulthood to writing texts.

An example of Fred Kaan's lyric is provided in "Faith, while trees are still in blossom," based upon biblical references such as John 4:35, John 5:56, Heb. 11:1, and Isa. 5:6. It is identified by its metrical index 8.7.8.7.

Faith, while trees are still in blossom,  
 plans the picking of the fruit;  
 faith can feel the thrill of harvest,  
 when the buds begin to sprout.

Long before the dawn is breaking,  
 faith anticipates the sun.  
 Faith is eager for the daylight,  
 for the work that must be done.

Long before the rains were coming,  
 Noah went and built an ark.  
 Abraham, the lonely migrant,  
 saw the Light beyond the dark.

Faith, uplifted, tamed the water  
of the undivided sea  
and the people of the Hebrews  
found the path that made them free.

Faith believes that God is faithful,  
- He will be who He will be -  
Faith accepts his call, responding:  
"I am willing; Lord, send me."<sup>8</sup>

Writing in the introduction to this volume, Kaan makes notes of two noteworthy revelations. The first is the influence of Duke Ellington upon his own writing, whose performances of sacred jazz Kaan helped produce throughout Europe. The second is his observation that

[The] most important activity of the Christian community, next to the eucharist, is congregational singing.... [We] can talk about new theological insights until we think the cows come home, but as long as these insights are not translated into hymns and liturgical action, (in the sense that leitourgia is public service!), they will never reach the people.<sup>9</sup>

Kaan's view clearly corresponds with those who are proponents of the contextualizing of our theology through our hymns. Otherwise, our theology will never reach our people.

The second contemporary resource for hymn lyric is Fred Pratt Green, who raised some surprising questions in the opening to his first volume of hymns and ballads.

Why is it there are periods when few new hymns are written and other periods when so many are written that one talks of an 'explosion'- or, to use Erik Routley's more decorous word, 'a renaissance'- of hymn writing? Why should the first half of the twentieth century be comparatively barren and the 1960s and the 1970s so fertile? What drove Watts to write his new-style hymns, and open the way to Charles Wesley? Or what drove Fred Kaan to do the same in our time? The answer is the same

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<sup>8</sup> Fred Kaan, "Faith, While Trees Are Still in Blossom," The Hymn Texts of Fred Kaan (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1985), 27. Used by permission.

<sup>9</sup> Kaan, xix.

in each case: need. Isaac Watts in the first half of the eighteenth century, and Fred Kaan in the middle of the twentieth, began to write hymns for their own congregations because they felt the need to revitalise worship through hymn singing by expressing Christian insights, old and new, in contemporary language. The time was opportune and the need was imperative.<sup>10</sup>

Among Green's own best known works is "Let the People Sing!" which appears in the new United Methodist Hymnal as "When In Our Music." Its metrical identification is 10.10.10.4., and is set to the tune Engelberg.

When, in our music, God is glorified,  
And adoration leaves no room for pride,  
It is as though the whole creation cried:  
Alleluia!

How often, making music, we have found  
A new dimension in the world of sound,  
As worship moved us to a more profound  
Alleluia!

So has the Church, in liturgy and song,  
In faith and love, through centuries of wrong,  
Borne witness to the truth in every tongue:  
Alleluia!

And did not Jesus sing a Psalm that night  
When utmost evil strove against the Light?  
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:  
Alleluia!

Let every instrument be tuned for praise!  
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!  
And may God give us faith to sing always:  
Alleluia!<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Fred Pratt Green, The Hymns and Ballads of Fred Pratt Green (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1982), xiii.

<sup>11</sup> Green, 51-52. Used by permission.



With a divine sense of humor, Green wrote a hymn text (8.6.8.6.) for the 1981 International Hymnody Conference. The lyric betrays his own personal discomfort over issues of changing gender in hymn language, it having become such a significant part of the recent debate within oldline churches.

How can we sing the praise of Him  
Who is no longer He?  
With bated breath we wait to know  
The sex of Deity.

Our Father is our Mother now,  
And Cousin too, no doubt.  
Must worship wait for hymnodists  
To get things sorted out?

I rise up, you men of God!  
The Church must learn to wait  
Till Brotherhood is sisterized,  
And Mankind out-of-date.

O may the You-know-who forgive  
Our stunned ambivalence,  
And in our sexist anguishings  
Preserve our common sense.<sup>12</sup>

Adapting new hymn lyric to old tunes is as old as the contrafacta with which Martin Luther explored new dimensions in hymnody. Wanting to do a sermon on the theme of baseball, I had the idea of taking the popular tune originally written by Albert Von Tilzer, "Take Me Out To the Ballgame," and writing new lyric that would blend medium and the message.

Casting about for ideas I came across some lyric written by Shirley Erena Murray of New Zealand. Her lyric is titled "Every Day," with metrical index classification as Irregular.

Every day  
I will offer you, loving God, my heart and mind  
every way I discover you  
in the work your hand has signed;  
help me see I'm your image,

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<sup>12</sup> Green, xvii. Used by permission.

and you have dreamed what I might be-  
 every day  
 in your Spirit, I'll find the love and energy!

Every day  
 I will focus on Christ, and lift my courage high  
 through the tides, and the tossing of waves that drown,  
 and hopes that die;  
 help me see that stepping out of the boat,  
 I'll learn what risk might be-  
 every day  
 in your Spirit, I'll find the love and energy!

Every day  
 I will walk to you, answer your companion's claim,  
 find my feet and my bearings  
 to try deep places in your name;  
 help me see I can speak for the faith  
 when you're at work in me,  
 every day  
 in your Spirit, I'll find the love and energy!<sup>13</sup>

Drawing upon her repetitive phrasing of "every day," and taking a cue from the imagery in her verses, I was able to construct the following lyric which fit into the popular tune, "Take Me Out To the Ballgame."

Every day I will praise You,  
 God, my heart and my mind;  
 In everything I'll discover You,  
 Find the handiwork that You have signed,  
 For I'm rooted in Your deep loving  
 and of Your dream for us all—  
 And it's one with Christ we've become  
 as we hear Your call!

Every day I will answer,  
 "Spirit, show me the way;  
 Help me to see I can speak the faith  
 That enriches and heals when I pray."

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<sup>13</sup> Shirley Erena Murray, "Every Day," In Every Corner Sing (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1992), 82. Used by permission.

For we're rooted in God's compassion  
 which claims us each, one and all!  
 And it's one with Christ we've become  
 as we hear Your call!

Every day we'll remember,  
 Christ, your world cries for bread.  
 All through its sorrows and emptiness  
 You are the way by which people are fed.  
 For we're rooted in God's own justice  
 and of God's claim on us all.  
 And it's one with Christ we've become  
 as we heed Your call!

Knowing how to use the metrical index will be a firm starting point for anyone wanting to explore the countless options that exist in adapting new lyric to familiar tunes. It is the first step, and least threatening way, to introduce new hymns to an oldline church.

#### New Hymns - New Tunes

The second level to introducing new hymns is to draw from collections that are being written as entirely fresh new pieces of prose and music by persons from within the oldline traditions. Erik Routley, Brian Wren, Shirley Erena Murray, Dan Damon, Jim Manley, Walter Farquharson with Ron Klusmeier, Jim and Jean Strathdee are but a few of the excellent resources available.

No contemporary writer has received greater recognition in the past decade than has Brian Wren. Ordained a Congregational minister in what was to become the United Reformed Church in England, Wren has written hymn texts that have been set to music by such composers as Joan Collier Fogg, Peter Cutts, Hal Hopson, Jane Marshall, William Rowan, and Dan Damon.

Surprisingly few of Wren's texts conform to standard metrical settings, resulting in most of his texts set to original music. In his published volumes, he avoids the American style of interlining--the printing of lyric within the staves of music. He publishes in the more traditional British style of tune printed above the lyric, which are themselves laid out on the page in poetic verse. He has definite reasons for this choice.



Warm father God, hugging every child,  
 feeling all the strains of human living,  
                   caring and forgiving  
                   till we're reconciled:

Hail and hosanna,  
 warm father God.

Young, growing God, eager, on the move,  
 seeing all, and fretting at our blindness,  
                   crying out for justice,  
                   giving all you have:

Hail and hosanna,  
 young, growing God!

Great, giving God, never fully known,  
 joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,  
                   closer yet than breathing,  
                   everlasting home:

Hail and Hosanna,  
 great, living God.<sup>15</sup>

This hymn originally began with what is now the second verse, when the first draft was completed in 1986. A revision the following year produced the present first stanza. Under consideration for inclusion in the new United Methodist Hymnal, the hymn failed by one vote because the line "strong mother God" proved too controversial. Nonetheless, the text stands as a wonderful testimony to those biblical images affirming God's likeness. If the human race is created in the image and likeness of God, then femaleness and maleness, youthfulness and agedness, give glimpses of the God who affirms our humanity.

Introducing this hymn to my congregation proved a deeply moving experience. A sermon was built around the entire text. A soloist sang the first two verses. I then offered a few paragraph's reflection upon those images, as they appear in scripture and through our experiences. The soloist next sang verses three, four, and five, pausing after each verse as I continued to reflect pastorally upon each verse's image.

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<sup>15</sup> Brian Wren, "Bring Many Names," Bring Many Names (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1989), 9. Used by permission.

The sermon concluded with me joining the soloist on verse six. The congregation later sang the hymn in its entirety as our closing hymn to worship. It was quite remarkable to hear the response of so many in worship that day who commented how close to home one or more of those verses personally came. Even more remarkable was that older adults and young adults each found their likeness in that hymn.

A second Wren hymn text, "We Bring, You Take," lent itself to a celebration of Communion at Easter. As I officiated at the Table, the choir recited in unison the refrain from the hymn, while I and an associate shared the words drawn from the verses while we broke bread and poured from the cup of blessing. I inserted the second verse from yet another Wren hymn text, "Christ Is Risen," to compliment the act of consecration, and to lend a focal point to the Easter motif. As people came forward to receive the elements, the hymn's tune was then played as part of the environment in which these gifts were offered and received. With the conclusion of distribution, the choir then sang as a Blessing the concluding verse to the hymn. Here, then, is the primary text to the hymn "We Bring, You Take," with the inserted verse marked by braces.

Refrain:           We bring- you take, and bless and break,  
                          and all are fed with wine and bread.

The night you were betrayed, good friend and Lord,  
you ate with friends your people's freedom-meal,  
and gave them bread, and shared a cup of wine,  
to show how you would give yourself for all.

Refrain: We bring- you take ....

With bread and fish, at breakfast by the sea,  
with bread and wine, at church or in the home,  
you feed us all, and no-one goes without,  
or says "It's mine!," but everything is shared.

Refrain: We bring- you take ....

And every time we share this bread of remembrance  
 we taste and tell of how the world should be  
 and dream of freedom, fairness, food, and peace,  
 and know that you are risen and alive.<sup>16</sup>

[Christ is risen! Raise your spirits  
 from the caverns of despair.  
 Walk with gladness in the morning.  
 See what love can do and dare.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits  
 from the caverns of despair.  
 Walk with gladness in the morning.  
 See what love can do and dare.  
 Drink the wine of resurrection,  
 not as servant, but as friend.  
 Jesus is our strong companion.  
 Joy and peace shall never end.]<sup>17</sup>

Refrain: We bring- you take....

We bring ourselves, and offer all we have.  
 We bring our caring for our town and land.  
 We bring our hope that every child be fed.  
 We taste eternal life, and dwell in love.

Refrain: We bring- you take....<sup>18</sup>

One of Wren's colleagues and collaborators is Dan Damon, a United Methodist minister currently serving a parish in Northern California. A fifteen-hymn collection which he published under the title A Place of Meeting contains original lyric as well as almost all original music. One of those hymns, "Ocean Is A Call To Worship," was written on the one year anniversary of the 1989 Santa Cruz earthquake. Its

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<sup>16</sup> Brian Wren, "We Bring, You Take," Bring Many Names (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1989), 29. Used by permission.

<sup>17</sup> Brian Wren, "Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!," Praising a Mystery (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1986), 5. Used by permission.

<sup>18</sup> Wren, "We Bring, You Take," 29.

imagery is evocative of the resonance which God's people find in and through the natural world (see Appendix N).

Refrain: Ocean is a call to worship  
                                   every morning evening;  
                           in its rising falling  
                                   hear the Spirit breathing.

When your people scatter,  
     broken, bruised and battered,  
 whisper on the waves and call us home.

When our temples totter,  
     Christ of wind and water,  
 calm the earth and soothe our shattered nerves.

When I'm listening walking,  
     praying needs no talking.  
 wonder at the width and breadth of love.<sup>19</sup>

Damon reflects the emerging generation of writers' influence by American jazz harmonizations, as well as contemporary poetic influences such as we find in Brian Wren's work. Damon's lyric is sparse, clear, and theologically relevant.

As is true of the music which accompanies Brian Wren's hymn texts, congregations will require education and plenty of repetitions of the newer musical forms Damon employs, although his music is far less experimental than some of the atonal music being written by contemporary British composers. What Damon does, however, is to offer a musical style far different and easily distinguished from the contemporary Praise Song and Gospel Song.

Among the many publishing sources for newer contemporary hymns, Hope Publishing Company of Carol Stream, Illinois, has established itself as a principal player in the publishing field. In addition to such writers as Brian Wren, Fred Kaan, Fred Pratt Green, and Shirley Erena Murray, Hope has issued a

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Charles Damon, "Ocean is a Call to Worship," A Place of Meeting (Marysville, Calif.: Twin Cities Printing, 1991), 13. Used by permission.



1990 hymnal, The Worshiping Church, which includes hymns from other present day writers such as Richard Avery and Donald Marsh, Ken Medema, Jane Marshall, Jaraslov John Vadja, and Fred Bock.

Agape Music, a division of Hope Publishing, has produced several hymnal supplements utilizing contributions from such well known writers as Timothy Dudley-Smith, Peter Cutts, Tom Colvin, Erik Routley, Margaret Clarkson, Jane Marshall, John Ness Beck, Austin C. Lovelace, and Carlton Young. Hymnal Supplement and Hymnal Supplement II (1984) are filled with non-traditional offerings for congregational singing.

A self-published edition of original hymn texts and music by Dosia Carlson provides a valuable resource for persons seeking inclusive language hymns along with hymns reflecting sensitivity to the whole spectrum of ageism, the physically handicapped, and environmental inclusiveness. "Come, Sing of Greening, Graceful Life" (see Appendix O) was written one summer by Dosia Carlson while on vacation at a family cottage in Michigan. Impressed by the freshness of God's creation, the birch trees with delicate new shoots, baby wrens hatching in the wren house on the backyard clothes post, it felt to her as if all nature seemed to be shimmering with young growth. This hymn reflects nature's continuing re-creation. The hymn's third stanza focuses on resurrection as embracing of the preceding metaphors.

Come, sing of greening, graceful life,  
     of leafy lacy trees,  
 With branches stretching to the sun  
     and dancing in the breeze.  
 Small seeds push through the ground  
     with power to astound.  
 Come, sing triumphant songs of praise  
     to God who gives all life.

Come, sing of happy, holy growth,  
     of babies newly born,  
 From tiny cells that multiply  
     with ev'ry passing morn.  
 Maturing work of art combines  
     flesh, mind, and heart.

Come, sing triumphant songs of praise  
to God who gives all growth.

Come, sing of deep undying love  
incarnate in God's son,  
Who lived and died and rose anew  
with hope for everyone.  
Redeemer of each soul, his grace  
can make us whole.

Come, sing triumphant songs of praise  
to God who gives all love.<sup>20</sup>

Thomas Troeger of Colgate-Rochester Theological Seminary is considered by Brian Wren to be this country's foremost poet-lyricist. In New Hymns For the Lectionary, we find these lyrics to Troeger's "Too Splendid For Speech But Ripe For A Song," (see Appendix P) set to Carol Doran's tune Carol's Vision (10.10.11.11.).

Too splendid for speech but ripe for a song:  
The wonders of God to whom we belong!  
What tune can we sing? What rich chords can we play  
To honor the potter who made us from clay.

We'll catch the soft sounds that sift from the breeze;  
We'll hum with the whales that hum in the seas.  
The waters that tickle the earth into spring  
will teach us the lilting new life we would sing.

The earth is God's flute, God's cello and chime.  
The wind draws the notes, the seasons keep time.  
At dusk and at night, from the sunrise past noon  
God's playing and singing a ravishing tune.

The swell of the earth's praise shall build to a blast  
Of trumpets and drums when God comes at last  
To hear if our lives, like the heavens above,  
Are lifted with music of justice and love.

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<sup>20</sup> Dosia Carlson, "Come, Sing of Greening, Graceful Life," God's Glory (Phoenix: Beatitudes Center for Developing Older Adult Resources, 1986), 34. Used by permission.

Alert to your notes that dance in the heart  
 We promise, O God, that we'll sing our part  
 And pray that the song which your song shall inspire  
 Will lead every nation to join in your choir.<sup>21</sup>

Another Troeger hymn, "Seek Not in Distant, Ancient Hills," based upon John 4:19-26, illustrates this poet's definitive grasp of language's power to convey what Lionel Adey referred to as our Christian myth.

Seek not in distant, ancient hills  
 the promised holy land,  
 But where you live do what God wills  
 and find it close at hand.

A single heaven wraps around  
 this whirling, watered stone,  
 And every place is sacred ground  
 where God is loved and known.

To climb the temple, footworn peak  
 where pilgrims long have trod  
 Unlock the bolted soul and seek  
 the present, living God.

In spirit and in truth you'll find  
 what human thought can't frame:  
 The source of breath and pulse and mind,  
 the primal wind and flame.<sup>22</sup>

As are all the texts to this collection, this one is set to the tune Sacred Ground (C. M.) by Carol Doran (see Appendix Q).

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas H. Troeger, "Too Splendid for Words But Ripe for A Song," New Hymns for the Lectionary, by Carol Doran and Thomas H. Troeger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 4. Used by permission.

<sup>22</sup> Troeger, 51. Used by permission.

One final recommendation for oldline churches seeking newer anthologies or hymnals: consider the new United Methodist Hymnal with its inclusion of hymns from ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds; the new Presbyterian Hymnal for its treatment of the Psalms; and the proposed new United Church of Christ hymnal for its ethnic diversity and inclusive language sensitivities.

Denominational publications and religious journals frequently identify new hymns and hymn writers. The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song is a resource of the Hymn Society of America that keeps current on the work of men and women from a wide spectrum of musical styles and background. It examines the historical roots in hymnody as well as offering in-depth critiques of emerging work.

In an article from the October 1990 issue of The Hymn, Victor E. Gerbauer writes of a new historiographical scheme for American church music as one way to find perspective on the hymns of the latter twentieth century.

The new scheme accepts the cultural and ethnic diversity of church music in America, yet also recognizes in each era a dominant practice, the musical expression of what we have called more recently the "public church." Alternative traditions, even quite autonomous traditions, usually exist alongside or in some relationship to the dominant tradition.<sup>23</sup>

#### Non-Traditional Contemporary Christian Hymns

A pattern is clearly identifiable in each era that hymns underwent significant change. Ambrose of Milan, Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, the Wesleys, and Ira Sankey began each of those eras by adapting scripture into new musical forms. Then would follow more narrative poetry and/or lyric, illuminating the theology of the writer.

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<sup>23</sup> Victor E. Gerbauer, "Problems in the History of American Church Music," The Hymn 41, no. 4 (October 1990): 45-48.

The same pattern is discernible within the environment of what we call contemporary Praise Songs, Praise Worship, or Praise Music. As a rule they lack the vitality, freshness of imagination, and expression of significant religious insight that marked the work of predecessors cited in earlier chapters of this project. One can hope that Routley's warning against reaching too low helps us distinguish between simplicity and simple mindedness in poetic construction and rhythmic insight as we choose from among a host of alternative text, tunes, and compilations.

In 1984, The Other Song Book was published as a compilation of old and new hymns for evangelical and non-traditional churches. Compiled by Dave Anderson, his introduction is instructive to the evangelical environment in which this particular music is used.

Every Christian knows that the expression of praise through music and singing is special to God. The musician is one of the first occupations mentioned in Scripture (Gen. 4:21). Did you know that God created us with a greater capacity to feel and think and remember when music is involved? It's true.

A friend of mine has said: "Music prepares the heart for worship and commitment. Music is the greatest mood alternator of all, and unlocks the ministry of God in the untressed soil of a person's soul. People love singing. They love being moved even when there is not a song in their hearts."<sup>24</sup>

There are 264 selections contained in this volume, most of which fit the evangelical Praise Song style. Of that number thirty-three are direct embellishments of Psalms, while thirty-seven are direct embellishments upon other scripture from both Old and New Testaments.

Tedd Smith's "There's A Quiet Understanding," first published in 1973, gives us an early model of this type of song (see Appendix R).

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<sup>24</sup> Dave Anderson, ed. The Other Songbook (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984), front cover fold.

There's a quiet understanding  
                   when we're gathered in the Spirit;  
 It's a promise that He gives us,  
                   when we gather in His name.  
 There's a love we feel in Jesus,  
                   there's a manna that He feeds us,  
 It's a promise that He gives us  
                   when we gather in His name.

And we know when we're together,  
                   sharing love and understanding,  
 That our brothers and our sisters  
                   feel the oneness that He brings.  
 Thank You, thank You, thank You, Jesus,  
                   for the way You love and feed us,  
 For the many ways You lead us,  
                   thank You, thank You, Lord.<sup>25</sup>

As this lyric demonstrates, Smith blends traditional Bible references such as "manna" with traditional images of Christian community. Also, one of the essential qualities of a Praise Song is its mnemonic character, to which both lyric and music lend themselves in this song. Were these lyrics to be projected on a screen from either an overhead projector or from slides, a praise worship team leading the singing, this Praise Song would quickly be learned even by a novice to congregational singing. Its limitation is a dullness of imagery, as well as a vagueness in fresh theological insight.

The Praise Chorus, as distinguished from Praise Song, is essentially a refrain with verses, in which the chorus is frequently sung repetitively, absent of the verse(s). A generic lyric can be found in almost every single gospel praise song book that has been published in the last decade.

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<sup>25</sup> Tedd Smith, "There's a Quiet Understanding." The Other Songbook. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1973). Used by permission.

Holy Spirit, Thou art welcome in this place.  
 Holy Spirit, Thou art welcome in this place.  
 Omnipotent Father of mercy and grace,  
 Thou art welcome in this place.

One might bemusedly ask how an archaic Old English phrase such as Omnipotent Father yields a contemporary theological relevance? But for the one who chooses to use such a lyric as this can make some slight adjustments. For use in worship settings where there ought to be gender inclusive sensitivity, a simple substitution of "Giver" for "Father" may add a creative touch to the image which is otherwise pedestrian. Another alternative phrase for "Omnipotent Father" might be "Most Generous Giver." This chorus could be sung several times, a praise worship team singing the chorus first, then inviting in the congregation; women, then men, then children could alternately sing the chorus.

In 1989 a new generation of contemporary Praise Songs were published by Integrity Music, Inc. What distinguished this collection was that each song book was preceded by the release of a cassette tape which was specifically produced for use in a sound system within the worship or devotional setting. Traditionalists would scoff at the idea as "Worship Muzak," but the publishers of this collection of contemporary Praise Songs was intentionally targeting the Baby Boomer generation.

The foreward to Songbook Three of the "Praise Worship" series offers this insight to the intention of the publishers:

**Praise and Worship Songbook Three** includes all of the songs from the following Hosanna! Music tapes:

Steadfast Love	The Solid Rock
His Word	Army of God
Forever Grateful	Lord of All

Every song is arranged in four-part harmony (SATB) and can be easily performed by your choir or worship team. The four-part harmony also works well as a basis for piano and organ accompaniment. Cued notes have been added where necessary to help establish the "feel" of the song.

Musicians should be encouraged to embellish these arrangements by improvising with chord symbols.<sup>26</sup>

As was true of the preceding anthology, these "Praise Worship" songbooks have scriptural cues for each piece. Additionally, Hosanna! Music division of Integrity Music, Inc., provides pre-recorded soundtracks which can be purchased to accompany solo, ensemble, and/or congregational singing. Integrity also makes available slides of lyric, or a words-only edition of the songbook from which can be produced overhead projection transparencies.

As an example of lyric from this series, Lynn Baird's "Come Into His Presence" is based upon Ps. 95:3 (see Appendix S). This is one of the more popular scriptures for composers of the Praise Song, and will be found in practically every publication of this genre of music. Baird's treatment reads:

Come into His presence with thanksgiving  
                                   in your heart give Him praise;  
 Come into His presence with thanksgiving  
                                   in your heart, your voices raise, your voices raise.  
 Give glory, and honor, and power unto Him.  
                                   Jesus, the name above all names.<sup>27</sup>

The minimalist language is obvious, as is the mnemonic character to the lyric and music—a basic Praise Chorus resting on Ps. 95:3. Still, for churches where musical resources are limited, this style of music has proven effective, energizing, and spirited.

This collection illustrates a refinement of the reach of popular culture and public religion's influence upon contemporary church music. Not only does Integrity rely upon cassette studio editions released in advance of its songbook, but also upon the popularity of a growing number of professional Christian music artists such as Michael W. Smith, Twila Paris, Amy Grant, and Andre Crouch. Today the contemporary Christian music sales segment is a multi-million dollar industry. The music of these

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<sup>26</sup> Tom Brooks, producer, Praise Worship Songbook Three (Mobile, Ala.: Integrity Music, 1989), iii

<sup>27</sup> Lynn Baird, "Come Into His Presence." Praise Worship, Songbook Three. Produced by Tom Brooks. Mobile, Ala.: Integrity Music, 1989.



artists receives extensive air time on Christian radio stations, and often proves to have what the industry labels as "cross over" appeal. Consumers purchase and play their favorite artists' works, then months later can go into a Bible Book store and purchase a pre-recorded tape accompaniment that has been lifted from the original soundtrack. All this precedes the final step, which is inclusion of that piece into a songbook. It is a blending of show business acumen and business panache with religious vitality—uniquely an American model.

"Thy Word," written by Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith, and recorded by Amy Grant, is one of the more popular of recent contemporary Praise Songs. It appears today in several Praise Song collections, and its chorus has been utilized as a choral hymn for illumination, as well as a choreographed call to worship. Another Amy Grant recording which proved wildly popular in the early '80s was "El Shaddai," with this chorus portion finding its way into the most recent United Methodist Hymnal.

Many options for Praise Songs anthologies are available in local Bible book stores, as well as extensive collections of tapes to accompany these additions. Building upon the commercial marketing success of Integrity, Vineyard Fellowship Ministries has produced an audio cassette series of its own in-house Praise Songs, with fully orchestrated instrumental arrangements to accompany individual or congregational singing. Vineyard also produces overhead transparency masters, with copyright permission included in the purchase price. The accompaniment tapes are not recorded from a studio orchestra, but rather from the next generation of instrumentation for the church—the MIDI.

#### MIDI Music

Perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of contemporary Christian music is its being wedded to the new technologies of synthesizer and computer. MIDI (Musical Instrumental Digital Interface) holds great potential for musical expression in the electronic medium. MIDI is a standardized computer protocol or language that allows computers to talk musically with one another in such a way as to allow up to sixteen different channels to perform simultaneously. This capability has been compared to sixteen

televisions or radios broadcasting simultaneously; we can only tune in one station at a time, but the MIDI integrates all channels into one fusion of sound.

There are four basic types of MIDI devices: controllers, sound modules, sequencers, and interfaces. The most common controller is a keyboard, but other types are available for players of different instruments. Guitar controllers let guitarists send MIDI messages to external sound modules or sequencers.

Sound modules are MIDI sound sources that lack a controller. A basic MIDI system consists of one or more controllers of various types and one or more sound modules. The controller sends messages on a specific MIDI channel(s), and the sound modules are set to receive on specific channels. Each sound module responds only to incoming MIDI messages on its specific channel(s).

Sequencing is the most common MIDI application. A sequencer records MIDI messages generated by a master controller. When played back, these messages are sent back to the MIDI instruments in the system, which responds as if their controls were being manipulated directly. There are two types of sequencers: hardware and software. Hardware sequencers are self-contained portable computers dedicated to sequencing. Software sequencers are programs run through a personal computer (PC). They offer the advantage of displays on the computer screen, and easy upgrades. The software sequencer, however, require a separate MIDI interface to translate between the language of MIDI and the internal language of the computer.

A simple sequencing system consists of a controller, sequencer, and one or more sound modules (see Appendix T). The sound modules are connected via MIDI Thru jacks in a "daisy-chain" configuration, making it easy to assemble the system. Most sound systems are multitimbral, meaning they can play several instrumental sounds at once. In other words, one electronic instrument can simultaneously produce piano, drums, bass, strings, brass, or any other combination of sound. Each sound responds to messages on a different MIDI channel, so each of the parts can be independent.

Many keyboard instruments include an internal sequencer and effects processor in addition to a multitimbral sound module. Thus, the keyboard station can create a whole orchestration with a single device. They also allow the recording of parts for external sound modules, using the workstation's onboard sequencer.

The advent of this kind of technology has opened up unlimited possibilities for church musicians. Worship teams using this technology can pre-record accompaniments to hymns, choruses and songs, and if using the software sequencer, can program on the computer instantaneous arrangements which are called up by a single keystroke. Another keystroke can produce a pre-programmed musical bridge between songs. Software packages such as Visions and Performer will also allow computer printout of vocal and accompaniment scores, so that instrumental and vocal scores can be added to the package.

Why should oldline churches be aware of this technology? Because it is a significant part of the future for the church. This is the way of the future, and MIDI workstations may well replace the more costly and up-keep-intensive pipe organs that have for so long marked the high culture music forms of the oldline church. At a fraction of the cost, MIDI offers entire orchestras or ensembles that more closely reflect the eclectic musical tastes of Baby Boomers and their children. MIDI represents an entirely distinct music genre that will shape the future of church music and congregational singing.

#### CCLI

With so much new music and technological support systems available, the question of copyright infringement has become particularly relevant to our churches. When a denominational hymnal is produced, copyright permission from composers (where not governed by Public Domain) has been secured. The church, in purchasing a new hymnal, secures the rights to freely use whatever hymn is sung from the hymnal.

With the advent of the copying machine it has become the practice of far too many churches to save money and the hassle of securing copyright permission from the composer, by simply reproducing preferred music and creating its own alternative hymnal and/or songbook. Some churches, my own included, have chosen to print hymns into their worship bulletins as a means of expanding the hymn repertoire of the congregation. To reproduce without appropriate copyright permission is illegal.

As a service, and in response to the need to govern copyright infringement, Christian Copyright Licensing International now offers congregations a blanket permission to reproduce hymns and songs over which they act as administrators. CCLI has secured administrative rights over several hundred publishing houses including: Word, Hope Publishing Company, United Methodist Publishing House (new United Methodist hymnal), Lorenz Corporation (F.E.L. Publications, Sacred Music Press, Timespan Music), and Integrity Music, to name a few. In addition, they administer the copyright permission to such individual composers as Jim Manley, Duane Talbot, James Firth, and Judy Jaquith.

The CCLI license allows for photocopying of congregationally sung music only. Called a Congregational Single Songsheet (CSS), it is defined as

that single song which is found in a compilation of songs (e.g. hymnal). This can be copied into a bulletin, a congregational songbook, a congregational songsheet, or put on a slide or transparency. But only if it is a song covered by our Authorized Publishers List, and only if it is to assist the congregation in singing it.<sup>28</sup>

The church purchasing a license is charged a fee based upon the average size of its worshipping congregation, and agrees to print its copyright notice as "Used by permission, CCLI License # \_\_\_\_\_."

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<sup>28</sup> Howard Rachinski, License Kit (Portland, Oreg.: Christian Copyright Licensing Intl., 1992-93), 6.

### Using New Hymns in Oldline Churches

The presentation of new hymns to a congregation requires thoughtful cooperation between minister and music staff. The enthusiasm of the minister is critical to setting an environment of acceptance and exploration. Music is a key to the heart dimension of worship, which is why it's important to involve the entire congregation in the creation of an environment suitable for healthy singing. Although the Choir, the soloists, and the instrumentalists are all vital prompters to the music of worship, the most important choir is made up of the men, women, and children with untrained voices who gather in the pews each week.

Effective congregational singing doesn't happen automatically. It comes about as the result of the intentional creation of a holistic worship environment in which the hymn may take many forms in its being learned or discovered. Several of those forms have already been suggested, allowing that the environment is shaped by the way we re-cast familiar hymns in fresh settings. This allows the individual congregant to not be left feeling less than adequate because he or she doesn't feel musically gifted enough to sight read each new hymn put in front of them.

Austin C. Lovelace has identified four areas in which congregational singing can be enhanced, and by which a holistic environment for the hymn can be sustained. These translate to sixty ways of using hymns (See Appendix U).<sup>29</sup>

Summarized, Lovelace suggests that hymns can be used with a variety of musical settings and enhancements: they can be both read and sung; they have liturgical uses that range from the way they are presented in a worship bulletin to their use as an integral part of the liturgical form (such as sung or read

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<sup>29</sup> Austin C. Lovelace, "60 Ways of Using Hymns, Part I," New Song, ed. Brian Wren (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing), bulletin no. 6 (May 1992): n.p.

as a Prayer of Confession); and the hymn may be used as a vehicle for education and spiritual formation (as in use as a devotional, study guide, or memorization program).<sup>30</sup>

Effective congregational singing does face obstacles. We live in a time when "Christian music" is more available than ever before in history. Yet, our oldline congregations are growing increasingly unfamiliar with our rich musical heritage born of exploration and creativity, one that could invigorate many a languishing congregation.

Culturally, music has become something we listen to, not something in which we openly participate with our whole being. Many children grow up today in an educational environment in which there is no longer funding for teaching music appreciation, and our churches have not filled the gap very effectively. The result is a passive spectator to the event of singing, something unheard of in the congregations of Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, John and Charles Wesley, or the revivals of Ira D. Sankey.

Oldline churches must guard against the belittling and undervaluing of music however it is used liturgically. How often is the Organ Prelude used as a filler or background to people's coming and going? How frequently is the organ or keyboard played to divert attention from the liturgical tasks of taking the offering, serving communion, offering prayer? Hymns can be reduced to being warmup acts for the sermon if they do not have a resonance with the theme of that day's worship. When music is demeaned this way, congregational valuing of its own role in singing is diminished.

Hymns can be selected for a worship setting that reflects a balance between the familiar and the new. People will stop singing if they never feel they have a chance to sing the hymns they know and love. As a general rule, use two familiar hymns to a new one within a worship setting. This helps establish a note of congregational self-confidence.

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<sup>30</sup> Austin C. Lovelace, "60 Ways of Using Hymns, Part II," *New Song*, ed. Brian Wren (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing), bulletin no. 7 (September 1992): n.p.

Not all hymns need be accompanied by organ. Some newer hymns lend themselves to being learned a capella, or with guitar, or on piano. Or synthesizer!

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, men's singing voices in our culture have dropped two tones. Thus, putting some older songs in a lower key may enhance the singing participation of the men in a congregation. Today's hymn voicings should never go above a D or E-flat.

The use of a song leader or Praise Worship Team can bring forth a new vitality in singing. A song leader need not act like a choir director, but could be seen more like a navigator setting the direction. It is a role that recalls that of the New England Puritan Precentor who led the lining of the songs from the Bay Psalm Book.

Critical to good congregational singing is an effective accompanist. More is required than keeping time and playing the right notes. If an accompanist resists or resents the introduction of hymns he or she feels is unworthy of their talent, that resistance will not go unnoticed in the congregation. Strong organ accompaniment many mean playing several verses where the right hand plays the melody and the left hand or pedal sustains a tonic drone, before breaking into a full accompaniment on the last verse. Strong accompaniment will mean playing the hymn in its entirety before it is sung, not making the assumption that by a few opening measures everyone will immediately recognize the hymn. When the accompaniment provides an introduction that clearly establishes tempo, intensity, and key, people will sing the opening lines to the hymn with greater confidence.

#### Concluding Summary

In the harmony of pitch, rhythm and lyric, the congregation comes together, breathes together, and feels together. The new hymns for an oldline faith do not come as rejections of a treasured musical heritage, but as affirmations of a process that has long been at work in the life and history of the Christian church.

Because a hymn is contemporary and new does not assure it of Biblical and theological integrity and worth, or with the capacity to speak to the heart of its own generation. Because a hymn has grown to be loved through longevity and the absence of musical and liturgical imagination, that inattention may signal serious signs of spiritual atrophy. But, if each generation is allowed its unique and creative voice to articulate faith that transcends generation and culture, then through its own hymns it becomes truly joyful, moving, and inherently communal, binding people together in praise of the One who is the Creative Presence, the Compassionate One, and the Truth That Saves.

Hymns, by the act of being composed and being sung, become acts of praise in the most radical sense of the term.

In the end, not before, but in the end, praise is a useless act. It aims at nothing. It requires nothing. It is not a means, but an end in itself, intending nothing other than its own action, which is strangely lacking in substance. In the end, we are able to see that our true end is to "glorify and enjoy God." Indeed, it belongs to this relation with this sovereign governor who gives to us far more abundantly than we ask or think, that all our political, polemical acts are superseded. Praise is simply an act of communion that has no purpose other than engagement in this right relationship. It is an act of extravagant homecoming when "we come down where we ought to be." That is all, and that is enough.<sup>31</sup>

New hymns for oldline faith will assist us in recovering our witness to the world, and will help us be effective in our evangelical responsibilities when we combine contemporary theological language and images in our texts with contemporary musical forms. That is all, and that is enough.

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<sup>31</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "Praise and the Psalms," The Hymn, 43, no. 3 (July 1992): 14-18.



## APPENDIX A

## The Hymns of Martin Luther

Translations from the Latin1. **Christum wir sollen loben schon (1524)**

"Now praise we Christ, the holy One" (Massie)

A hymn of eight stanzas on the birth of Christ, a free translation of **A solis ortus cardine**, hymn of composite authorship, the first part ascribed to Sedulius.

2. **Der du bist drei Einigkeit (1543)**

"Thou who art three in unity" (Massie)

A hymn of praise to the Holy Trinity, a translation of the eight line **O lux beata**, Trinitas, ascribed to Ambrose, with an additional verse by Luther.

3. **Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ (1524)**

"All praise to Jesus' hallowed Name" (Massie)

A hymn of seven stanzas on the Incarnation, the first stanza a translation of the Latin sequence, **Grates nunc omnes reddamus**, the remaining six stanzas original with Luther.

4. **Herr Gott, dich loben wir (1529)**

"Lord God, Thy praise we sing" (Massie)

A versification of **Te deus laudamus**, arranged for antiphonal singing by two choirs.

5. **Jesus Christus unser Heiland (1524)**

"Christ, who freed our souls from danger" (Massie)

A catechetical hymn, in ten stanzas, on the Holy Communion, inspired by John Huss's hymn, **Jesus Christus, nostra salus**, but largely original.

6. **Komm Gott Schopfer, heiliger Geist (1524)**

"Come God, Creator, Holy Ghost" (Massie)

A free translation, in seven stanzas, of the great Latin hymn to the Holy Spirit, **Veni Creator Spiritus**.

7. **Komm Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott (1524)**

"Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord" (Winkworth)

A hymn in three stanzas, eight lines each, to the Holy Spirit. The first stanza is based on the Latin antiphon **Veni sancte spiritus**; the second and third stanzas are original.

8. **Mitten wir im Leben sind (1524)**

"Though in midst of life we be" (Massie)

A hymn in three stanzas of thirteen lines each, "A hymn of triumphs over the grave, death and hell," based upon the Latin antiphon, **Media vita in morte sumus**.

9. **Nun komm der Heiden Heiland (1524)**

"Savior of the heathen known" (Massie)

A translation in eight stanzas of the Advent hymn, **Veni, Redemptor gentium**, ascribed to Ambrose.

10. **Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich (1529)**

"In these our days so perilous" (Massie)

A brief prayer for peace in one stanza based upon the antiphon, **Da pacem Domine**.

11. **Was furcht'st du, Feind Herodes sehr (1541)**

"Why, Herod, unrelenting foe" (Massie)

An Epiphany hymn in five stanzas, the beginning of which is based on the eighth stanza of Sedulius's hymn, **A solis ortus cardine**.

12. **Wir glauben all' an Einen Gott (1524)**

"We all believe in one true God"

A versification of the Nicene Creed, *Patrem credimus*, in three stanzas of ten lines each; appointed by Luther for use in his German Mass, 1526.

Reworking of German Spiritual Folksongs

13. **Christ lag in Todesbanden (1524)**

"Christ was laid in death's strong bands"

An Easter hymn in seven stanzas, based, though only slightly, on the twelfth century folksong *Christ ist erstanden*, with traces (fourth and fifth stanzas) of the Latin sequence, *Victimae paschali laudes*.

14. **Gott der Vater wohn uns bei (1524)**

"God the Father, with us stay"

A litany hymn of three stanzas of fourteen lines each. The first lines of each stanza are addressed to the Three Persons of the Trinity, respectively, but the rest of the text is identical in all stanzas. Based on an ancient folksong used in Lent and before Ascension Day.

15. **Gott sei gelobet und gebenedeiet (1524)**

"May God be praised henceforth and blest forever" (Massie)

A three stanza Communion hymn, the first stanza only of which is similar to a pre-Reformation hymn. Every fourth line concludes with *Kyrie Eleison*.

16. **Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist (1524)**

"Now pray we all God, the Comforter (Russell)"

A four stanza hymn for Pentecost, the first stanza based on a twelfth century hymn. The other stanzas are original with Luther who intended this as a post-communion hymn.

Hymns Based on the Psalms

**17. Ach Gott von Himmel sieh darein (before 1524)**

"Look down, O Lord, from heaven behold" (Cox)

A hymn in six stanzas on the Church, her conflicts, needs, strength, etc. A free versification of Psalm 12.

**18. Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu dir (1524)**

"Out of the depths I cry to Thee" (Winkworth)

A free versification of Psalm 130; five stanzas, eight lines each. A hymn of repentance and faith, originally thought of as a funeral hymn.

**19. Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott (1528?)**

"A mighty fortress is our God" (Composite)

A free versification of Psalm 46 in four stanzas of nine lines each, generally regarded as Luther's finest hymn. Probably issued first as a broad-sheet publication.

**20. Es spricht der Unweisen Mund wohl (1524)**

"The mouth of fools doth God confess" (Massie)

A versification of Psalm 14 in six stanzas, eight lines each. One of the earliest of Luther's hymns.

**21. Es wollt uns Gott genadig sein (1524)**

"May God unto us gracious be" (Russell)

A versification of Psalm 67; perhaps a closing hymn, though a strong missionary character is evident. Three stanzas, nine lines each.

**22. War Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit (1524)**

"Had God not come, may Israel say" (Massie)

A versification of Psalm 124 in three stanzas, eight lines each.

23. **Wohl dem der in Gottes Furcht steht (1524)**

"Happy the man who feareth God" (Massie)

A versification of Psalm 128, this is a hymn on the family in five stanzas, four lines each.

Hymns Based on Scripture Passages

24. **Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam (1541)**

"To Jordan came our Lord the Christ" (Massie)

A didactic hymn in seven stanzas, nine lines each, on Holy Baptism. Based on Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 16:15, 16.

25. **Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot (1524)**

"That man a godly life might live" (Massie)

A catechetical hymn on the Ten Commandments in twelve stanzas, four lines each with a Kyrie at the end of each stanza.

26. **Jesaja dem Propheten das geschah (1526)**

"These things the seer Isaiah did befall" (Massie)

A poor versification of the Sanctus (Isaiah 6:1-4) in the Communion Service, written for the German Mass, 1526.

27. **Mensch willt do leben seligich (1524)**

"Wilt thou, O man, live happily" (Massie)

A brief catechetical hymn, six stanzas, based on the Ten Commandments. Companion hymn to No. 25.

28. **Mit Fried' und Freud' ich fahr' dahin (1524)**

"In peace and joy I now depart"

A four stanza versification of the Nunc Dimittis (Simeon's Song, Luke 2:29-32) and the best of the renderings of liturgical texts. Frequently used as a funeral hymn.

29. **Sie ist mir lieb, die werthe Magd (1535)**

"Dear is to me the holy Maid" (Massie)

A hymn on the Christian church in three stanzas of twelve lines each. Based on Revelation 12:1-6.

30. **Vater unser im Himmelreich (1539)**

"Our Father, Thou in heaven above" (Winkworth)

A paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) in nine stanzas, six lines each.

31. **Von Himmel hoch da kam ich her (1535)**

"Good news the angels bring" (Russell)

An original Christmas hymn, in fifteen stanzas, four lines each, based on St. Luke. Said to have been written by Luther for his little son Hans.

Entirely Original Hymns

32. **Ein neues Lied wir heben an (1524)**

"By help of God I fain would tell" (Massie)

Luther's first hymn, a narrative in twelve stanzas, nine lines each, inspired by the martyrdom in Brussels, July 1, 1523, of two Antwerp Augustinians because of their adherence to Luther's teachings. Not intended for congregational use.

33. **Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort (1541?)**

"Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy love" (Winkworth)

A hymn in three stanzas, four lines each, written for the choir boys in Wittenberg "to sing against the two arch enemies of Christ and His Holy Church, the Pope, and the Turks," the latter of whom were even then storming the gates of Vienna.

34. **Jeus Christus unser Heiland, der den Tod uberwand (1524)**

"Jesus Christ, who came to save"

An Easter hymn, three stanzas, four lines each, with Kyrie.

35. **Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein (1523)**

"Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice" (Massie)

One of Luther's earliest hymns, ten stanzas, seven lines each. A hymn on the blessings of redemption by Christ.

36. **Von Himmel kam der Engel Schar (1543)**

"To shepherds as they watched by night" (Massie)

A shorter Christmas hymn in six stanzas, four verses, intended to be sung to the tune **Von Himmel hoch**.

**LUTHER AND CONGREGATIONAL SONG**

by Luther D. Reed

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## APPENDIX B

### Characteristics of the Wesleyan Hymn Form and Content

#### Wesleyan Hymn Form

1. Rich in variety of poetic meters. Not content to remain with the old psalm meters, Wesley exhibited superb mastery of at least twenty meters.
2. So constructed that sound and sense coincide. Wesley rarely fails to make the ends of his lines correspond with natural pauses in thought, thus making them very suitable for singing.
3. Bold and free in scriptural paraphrase. Rather than keeping strictly to a restatement of the original in a mechanical manner, Wesley also makes imaginative comment on his scriptural passages.
4. Skillful in the mastery of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin vocabulary.
5. Masterful in the use of the conventional eighteenth-century literary devices— careful rhyme, repetition, chiasmus.

#### Wesleyan Hymn Content

1. Replete with Christian dogma, Wesley, reflecting Moravian influence, is Arminian in his theology. His hymns taken together constitute a body of skillfully condensed doctrine, or, in the words of John Wesley, "a body of experimental and practical divinity."
2. Full of scriptural allusion. Wesley's hymns are always disciplined by biblical truth, and many of them are finely wrought biblical mosaics.
3. Expressive of passionate Christian experience. Every mood of the Christian soul is reflected with a fervour which is free of vulgarity and mawkish excess. The predominant note is one of joy and confidence.
4. Simple and smooth, speaking directly of important matters pertaining to God and the souls of men. With disarming simplicity, Wesley confronted plain men and women with the central concerns of the faith. The hymns were democratic in design and evangelistic in purpose.



5. **Mystical, glowing with a luminous quality transfiguring history and experience. This comes in the audacity of intimacy with which Wesley talks to God as a friend, a quality which makes his hymns timeless and universal in their appeal.**

**SING WITH UNDERSTANDING**

**by Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath**

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## APPENDIX C

## Lowell Mason's Philosophy of Church Music

1. **Church music must be simple, chaste correct, and free of ostentation.** It must lie within the performance abilities of those for whom it is intended. By "correct," Mason meant in accord with contemporary European harmonic practices.
2. **The text must be handled with as much care as the music; each must enhance the other.** Text and music together must convey a single feeling, mood, or idea.
3. **Congregational singing must be promoted.** Though he admitted he often heard, "Oh, I can't sing," Mason insisted that "Every Christian is, or ought to be, deeply interested in congregational singing."
4. **Capable choirs and judiciously used instruments, particularly the organ, are indispensable aids to services.**
5. **A solid music education for all children is the only means of genuine reform in church music.** "A thorough and permanent reformation in church music, however, cannot be affected, but by a gradual process. Children must be taught music as they are taught to read. Until something of this kind is done, it is vain to expect any great and lasting improvement."
6. **Musicianship per se is subordinate to facilitating worship.** "Mere musical talent will no more enable a man to play than to sing church music appropriately.... Execution...is probably not more important to the organist, than studied elocution is to the preacher.... A minister must...be able to speak

acceptably...and if he is eloquent...it is so much the better. So with the organist: he must be able to play in a plain and appropriate style...if he be a finished performer, it is all the better, provided he possesses the other more important qualifications.

**LOWELL MASON: A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY**

By Carol A. Pemberton

Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988

**LOWELL MASON: HIS LIFE AND WORK**

by Carol Pemberton

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## APPENDIX D

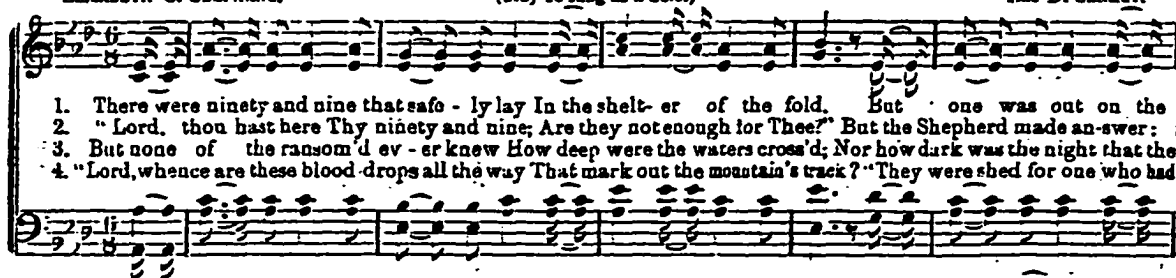
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## THE NINETY AND NINE.

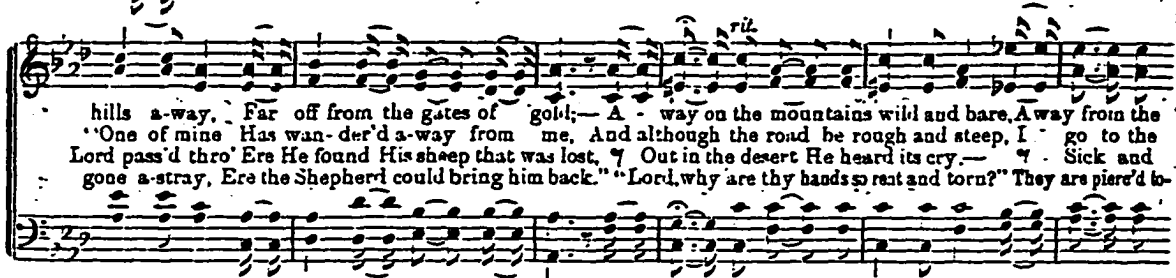
ELIZABETH C. CLEPHANE.

(May be sung as a Solo.)

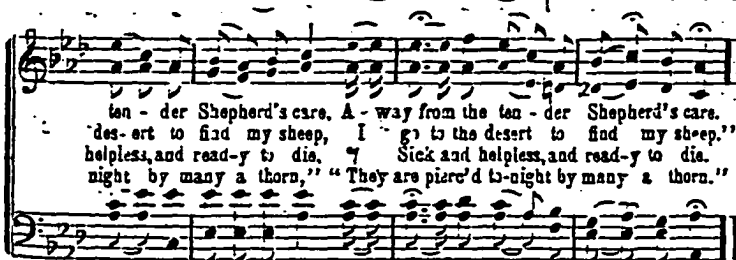
IRA D. SANKEY.



1. There were ninety and nine that safe - ly lay In the shelt - er of the fold, But one was out on the  
 2. "Lord, thou hast here Thy ninety and nine; Are they not enough for Thee?" But the Shepherd made an - swer:  
 3. But none of the ransom'd ev - er knew How deep were the waters cross'd; Nor how dark was the night that the  
 4. "Lord, whence are these blood - drops all the way That mark out the moountain's track?" "They were shed for one who had



hills a - way. Far off from the gates of gold;— A - way on the mountains wild and bare, Away from the  
 "One of mine Has wan - der'd a - way from me, And although the road be rough and steep, I go to the  
 Lord pass'd thro' Ere He found His sheep that was lost, ¶ Out in the desert He heard its cry.— ¶ Sick and  
 gone a - stray, Ere the Shepherd could bring him back." "Lord, why are thy hands so rent and torn?" They are pierc'd lo-



ten - der Shepherd's care, A - way from the ten - der Shepherd's care.  
 des - ert to find my sheep, I go to the desert to find my sheep."  
 helpless, and read - y to die, ¶ Sick and helpless, and read - y to die.  
 night by many a thorn," "They are pierc'd to - night by many a thorn."

5 But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,  
 And up from the rocky steep,  
 "There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,  
 "Rejoice, I have found my sheep!"  
 And the angels sang around the throne,  
 "Rejoice for the Lord brings back His own!"

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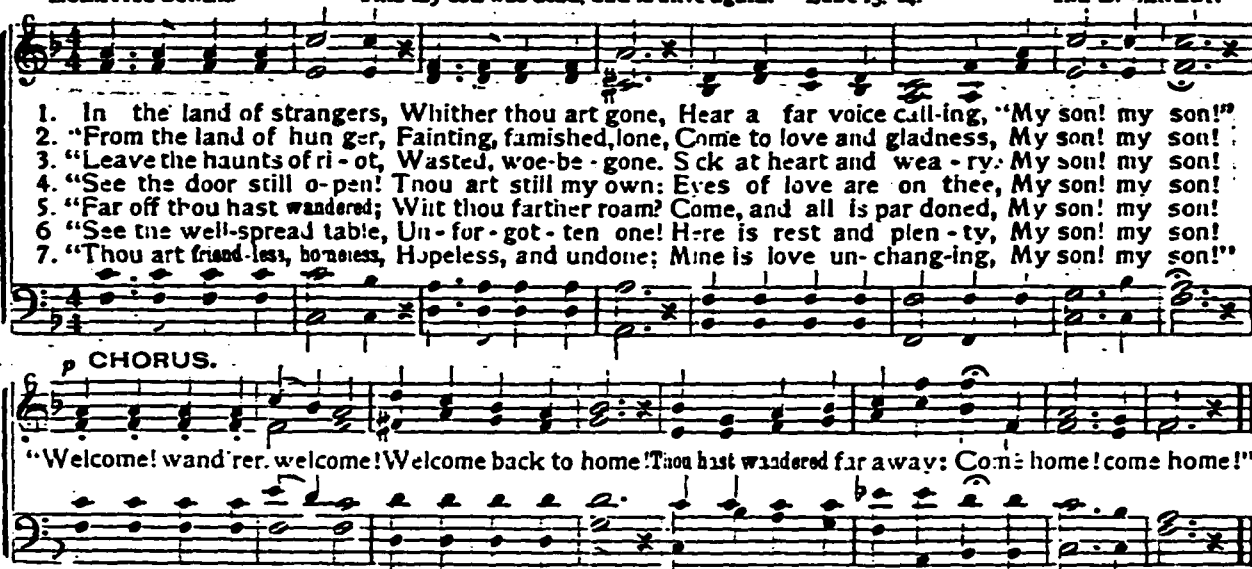
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Source: F. E. Belden, compiler and publisher, Christ in Song (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1908), 61.

## APPENDIX E

**3 WELCOME! WANDERER, WELCOME!**

HORATIUS BONAR. "This my son was dead, and is alive again."—Luke 15. 24. IRA D. SANKEY.



1. In the land of strangers, Whither thou art gone, Hear a far voice call-ing, "My son! my son!"  
 2. "From the land of hun-ger, Fainting, famished, lone, Come to love and gladness, My son! my son!"  
 3. "Leave the haunts of ri-ot, Wasted, woe-be-gone. Sick at heart and wea-ry, My son! my son!"  
 4. "See the door still o-pen! Thou art still my own: Eyes of love are on thee, My son! my son!"  
 5. "Far off thou hast wandered; Wilt thou farther roam? Come, and all is par-doned, My son! my son!"  
 6. "See the well-spread table, Un-for-got-ten one! Here is rest and plen-ty, My son! my son!"  
 7. "Thou art friend-less, home-less, Hopeless, and undone; Mine is love un-chang-ing, My son! my son!"

**CHORUS.**

"Welcome! wand'rer, welcome! Welcome back to home! Thou hast wandered far away: Come home! come home!"

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Source: F. E. Belden, compiler and publisher, Christ in Song (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1908), 3.

## APPENDIX F

854

## THERE'LL BE NO DARK VALLEY.

Rev. W. O. COSMING.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. 21 : 4.

IRA D. SANKEY.

1. There'll be no dark val ley when Je-sus comes, There'll be no dark valley when Je-sus comes; There'll be  
 2. There'll be no more sorrow when Je-sus comes, There'll be no more sorrow when Je-sus comes; But a  
 3. There'll be no more weep-ing when Je-sus comes, There'll be no more weeping when Je-sus comes; But a  
 4. There'll be songs of greet-ing when Je-sus comes, There'll be songs of greet-ing when Je-sus comes; And a

REFRAIN

no dark val-ley when Jesus comes To gather His loved ones home. To gather His loved ones home,  
 glo-rious morrow when Jesus comes To gather His loved ones home.  
 bless-ed reaping when Jesus comes To gather His loved ones hom-  
 joy-ful meeting when Jesus comes To gather His loved ones home. safe home.

To gather His loved ones home; There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes To gather His loved ones home.  
 safe home;

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Source: F. E. Belden, compiler and publisher. Christ in Song, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1908), 854.

## APPENDIX G

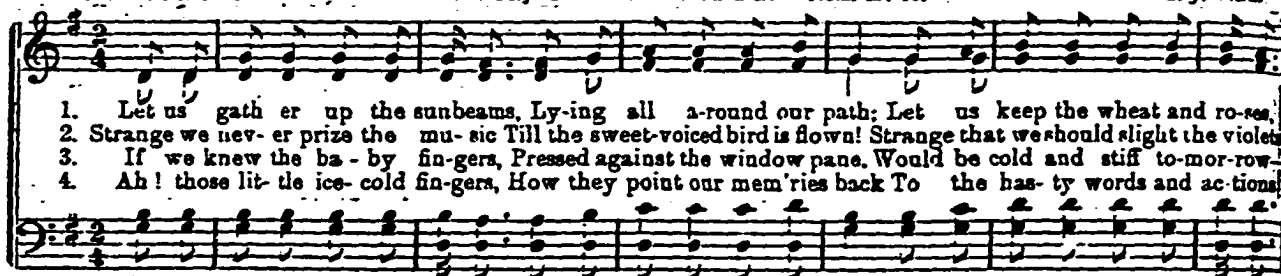
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## SCATTER SEEDS OF KINDNESS.

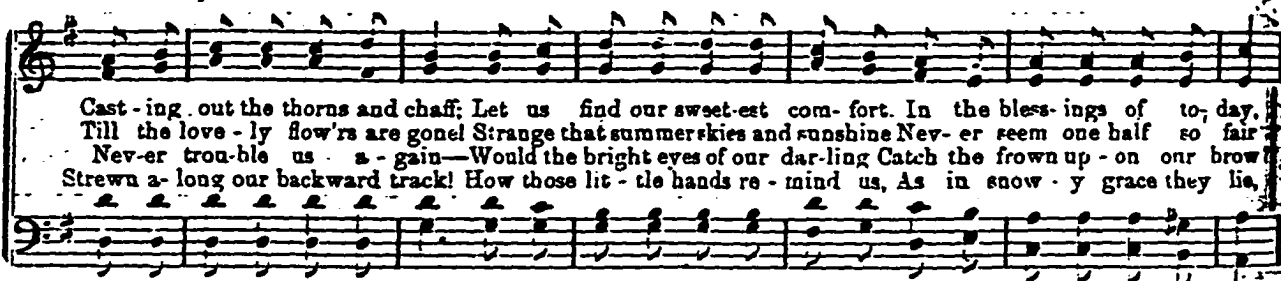
Mrs. ALBERT SMITH.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another."—Rom. 12: 10.

S. J. VAIL.

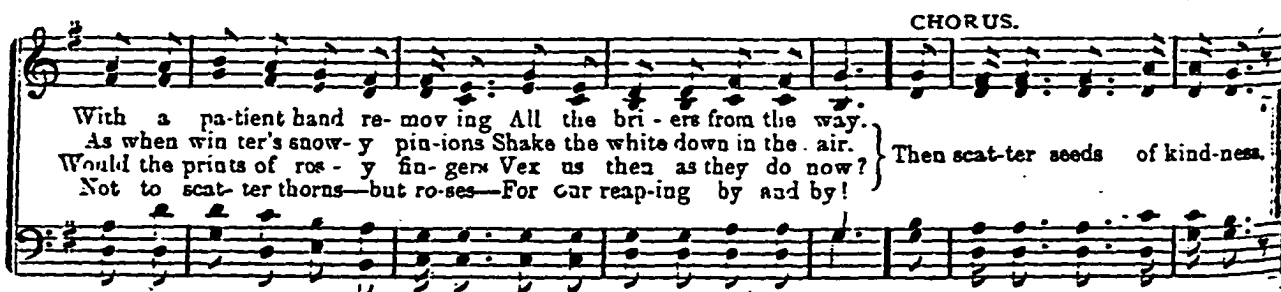


1. Let us gath er up the sunbeams, Ly-ing all a-round our path; Let us keep the wheat and ro-ses,  
 2. Strange we nev-er prize the mu-sic Till the sweet-voiced bird is flown! Strange that we should slight the violet  
 3. If we knew the ba-by fin-gers, Pressed against the window pane, Would be cold and stiff to-mor-row  
 4. Ah! those lit-tle ice-cold fin-gers, How they point our mem'ries back To the has-ty words and ac-tions!



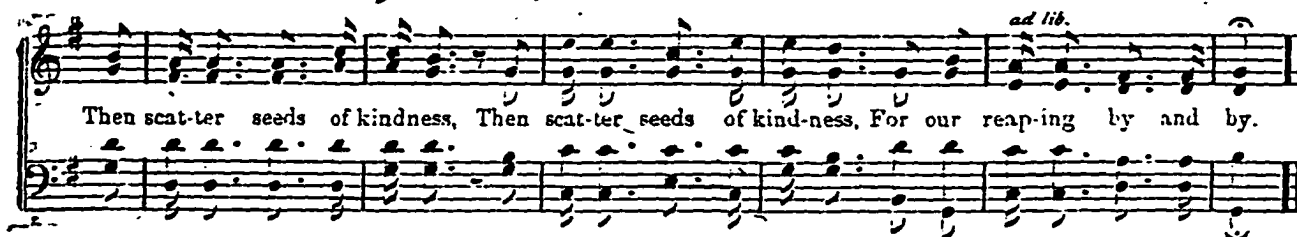
Cast-ing out the thorns and chaff; Let us find our sweet-est com-fort. In the bless-ings of to-day,  
 Till the love-ly flow'rs are gone! Strange that summerskies and sunshine Nev-er seem one half so fair!  
 Nev-er trou-ble us a-gain—Would the bright eyes of our dar-ling Catch the frown up-on our brow!  
 Strewn a-long our backward track! How those lit-tle hands re-mind us, As in snow-y grace they lie.

CHORUS.



With a pa-tient hand re-mov-ing All the bri-ers from the way.  
 As when win-ter's snow-y pin-ions Shake the white down in the air.  
 Would the prints of ros-y fin-gers Vex us then as they do now? } Then scat-ter seeds of kind-ness.  
 Not to scat-ter thorns—but ro-ses—For our reap-ing by and by!

*ad lib.*



Then scat-ter seeds of kindness, Then scat-ter seeds of kind-ness, For our reap-ing by and by.

Source: F. E. Belden, compiler and publisher, Christ in Song, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1908), 568.

# Sing Praise! Sing Free! Sing for Joy!

Norman Broadbent


Norman Broadbent



1. O God we sing of joy! For love that knows no  
 2. Why are we gath - ered here, a peo - ple un - to  
 3. We lift our eyes to see God's grace in lit - tle  
 4. O Christ, at times our world cries out its mourn - ful  
 5. Bless this our tie that binds us in the mind of



bounds. Love that comes dan - cing, moan - ful and  
 God? Cre - a - tion springs a - live; free, with - out  
 things; Here comes the morn - ing sun, warm touch - es  
 soul. Bend low your ear to hear, Re - new us  
 God. Be - hold God's gen - tle face in - spir - it -



weep - ing, Full of the pangs of birth and dy - ing, yet still  
 com - pro - mise; We share a sac - red pride in Christ, the Good News  
 ev - 'ry - one, God etch - es night with light, the pro - mise of our  
 from our fears, Give us your pres - ence near such heal - ing Life sur -  
 ing this place; Christ sets us free to trace the new life res - ur -



ris - ing!  
 rais - es!  
 ris - ing!  
 pris - es!  
 rect - ing!

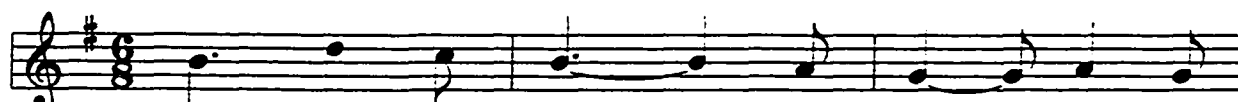
Sing praise! Sing free! Sing for joy!



## APPENDIX I

## God Makes All Things New

Norman Broadbent



1. Our God has said, "Be - hold, I make  
2. "Just like a moth - er shall I give  
3. Re - joice, be glad for God has borne us



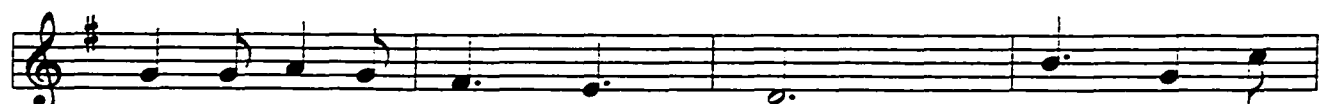
all things new; I shall for - give your sins,  
com - fort; I'll nur - ture and car - ry you,  
out of joy, Gave birth with - in this soul the



and shall re - joice, and shall re - joice in all I do.  
cel - e - brate your joys and share with you the hurt - ing tears.  
la - bor is not vain. Bless'd is the child a - gain!



No long - er weep nor mourn, Fear grow - ing old or  
So I will com - fort you; I who gave you birth shall  
Ser - vants, we take the cue, mir - rors to hope, an



help - less like a child of two, For I make  
not turn a - way from you, For I make  
of - f'ring to hu - man view; Our God makes



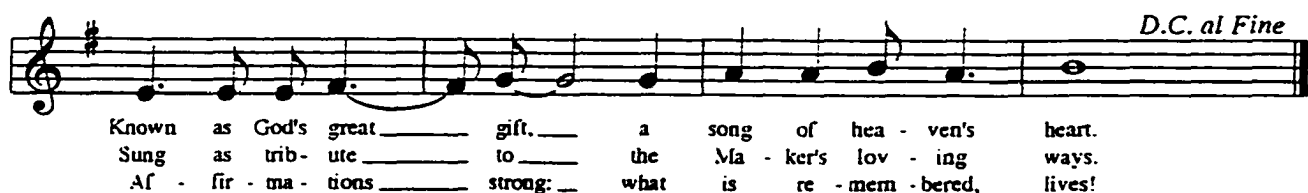
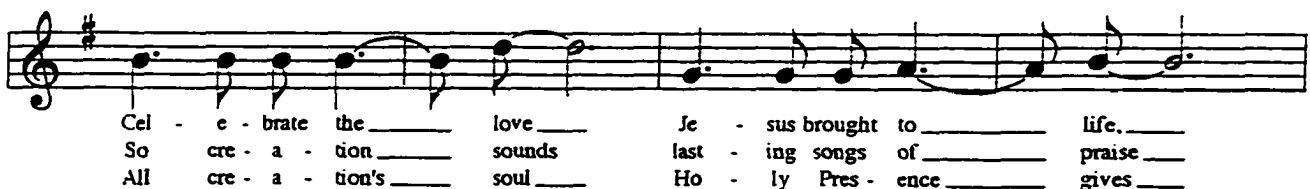
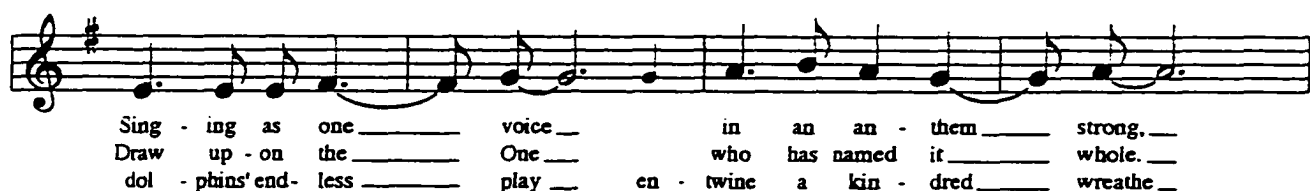
all things new.  
all things new."  
all things new.

## APPENDIX J

## Sing Alleluia to the Lord

Norman Broadbent ♩ = 136

Unknown/Norman Broadbent



# Live the Vision, Share the Dream

Norman Broadbent

Norman Broadbent  
irregular

1. With the gift of Peace our time to go has neared. Comes the
2. With the gift of Prayer our doubts and fears are heard. Comes the
3. With the gift of Bread our lives are broken wide. Comes the
4. With the gift of Song our time of wor-ship ends. Comes the



call to be dis - ci - ples to a world in tears.  
 chance to of - fer oth - ers re - con - cil - ing words.  
 time to pass the cup, re - flec - tions deep in - side.  
 time to greet each oth - er of - 'ring "Peace my friend."



It is Christ whose work we share: Word of \_\_ God our bur - dens bear!  
 See the li - on and the lamb: Word of \_\_ God brings Peace at hand!  
 We are knead - ed as the grain: Word of \_\_ God is raised a - gain!  
 Seeds have fall - en plant - ed deep: Word of \_\_ God its har - vest reap!



Live the vi - sion and share the \_\_ dream, an ev - er - flow - ing stream.  
 Live the vi - sion and share the \_\_ dream, re - con - ciled, made free.  
 Live the vi - sion and share the \_\_ dream, bro - ken, healed, re - deemed.  
 Live the vi - sion and share the \_\_ dream, love's song now com - plete!

## TALLIS' CANON. (L.M.)

THOMAS TALLIS, c. 1510–85.



## APPENDIX M

## DUKE STREET. (L.M.)

JOHN HATTON, d. 1793.



Refrain  $\text{U}$   $\text{Bmin7}$   $\text{G}$   $\text{Emin}$   $\text{A}$

O-cean is a call to wor-ship eve-ry morn-ing eve-ning;

$\text{D}$   $\text{Bmin7}$   $\text{G}$   $\text{A}$   $\text{D}$  *Fin*

in its ri-sing fall - ing hear the Spir-it breath-ing.

$\text{D}$   $\text{Bmin}$   $\text{G}$   $\text{Emin}$   $\text{A}$

1. When your peo-ple scat-ter, bro-ken,bruised and bat-tered.  
 2. When our tem-ples tot-ter, Christ of wind and wa-ter,  
 3. When I'm lis-tening walk-ing, pray-ing needs no talk-ing.

$\text{Bmin}$   $\text{G}$   $\text{A}$  *DC*

1. whis-per on the waves and call us home.  
 2. calm the earth and soothe our shat-tered nerves.  
 3. Won-der at the width and breadth of love.

*Santa Cruz*  
*6.6.9 with refrain*

*Dan Damon*  
*(c) 1990*

**OCEAN IS A CALL TO WORSHIP**

*refrain*

Ocean is a call to worship  
 every morning evening;  
 in its rising falling  
 hear the Spirit breathing.

When your people scatter,  
 broken, bruised and battered,  
 whisper on the waves and call us home.

When our temples totter,  
 Christ of wind and water,  
 calm the earth and soothe our shattered nerves.

When I'm listening walking,  
 praying needs no talking.  
 Wonder at the width and breadth of love.

OCEAN IS A CALL TO WORSHIP  
 by Dan Damon

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## Come, Sing of Greening, Graceful Life

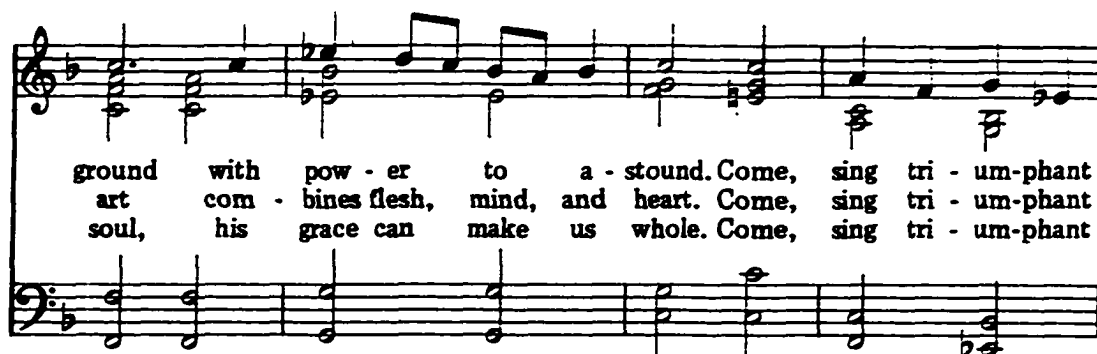
VITA  
Words and Music by  
Dosia Carlson

*Unison*

1. Come, sing of green - ing, grace - ful life, of leaf - y lac - y  
 2. Come, sing of hap - py, ho - ly growth, of ba - bies new - ly  
 3. Come, sing of deep un - dy - ing love in - car - nate in God's

trees, With branch - es stretch - ing to the sun and  
 born, From ti - ny cells that mul - ti - ply with  
 son, Who lived and died and rose a - new with

danc - ing in the breeze. Small seeds push through the  
 ev - 'ry pass - ing morn. Ma - tur - ing work of  
 hope for ev - 'ry - one. Re - deem - er of each



ground with pow - er to a - stound. Come, sing tri - um-phant  
 art com - bines flesh, mind, and heart. Come, sing tri - um-phant  
 soul, his grace can make us whole. Come, sing tri - um-phant



songs of praise to God who gives all life. \_\_\_\_\_  
 songs of praise to God who gives all growth. \_\_\_\_\_  
 songs of praise to God who gives all love. \_\_\_\_\_

# COME, SING OF GREENING, GRACEFUL LIFE

by Dosia Carlson

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## APPENDIX P

(tune: Carol's Vision)  
10-10-11-11

Thomas H. Troeger

Carol Doran

*♩* = 126

1. Too splen - did for speech but ripe for a  
 2. We'll catch the soft sounds that sift from the  
 3. The earth is God's flute, God's cel - lo and  
 4. The swell of earth's praise shall build to a  
 5. A - lert to your notes that dance in the

(1) song: The won - ders of God to whom we be -  
 breeze. We'll hum with the whales that hum in the  
 (3) chime. The wind draws the notes. The sea - sons keep  
 blast Of trum - pets and drums when God comes at  
 (5) heart We prom - ise, O God, that we'll sing our

(1) long! What tune can we sing? What rich chords can we  
 seas. The wa - ters that tick - le the earth in - to  
 (3) time. At dusk and at night, from the sun - rise past  
 last To hear if our lives, like the heav - ens a -  
 (5) part And pray that the song which your song shall in -

*Text based on Psalm 93.*

(1) play To hon - or the pot - ter who made us from  
 spring Will teach us the lilt - ing new life we would  
 (3) noon God's play - ing and sing - ing a rav - ish - ing  
 bove, Are filled with the mu - sic of jus - tice and  
 (5) spire Will lead ev - ery na - tion to join in your

[1, 3]  
 (1) clay?  
 (3) tune.

[2, 4] [5]  
 (2) sing.  
 (4) love.  
 (5) choir.

# TOO SPLENDID FOR SPEECH, BUT RIPE FOR A SONG

Words: Thomas Troeger

Music: Carol Doran

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## APPENDIX Q

(tune: Sacred Ground)  
C. M.

Thomas H. Troeger

Carol Doran

♩.108

1. Seek not in dis - tant, an - cient  
2. A sin - gle heav - en wraps a -  
3. To climb the tem - pled, foot - worn  
4. In spir - it and in truth you'll

(1) hills The prom-ised ho - ly land,  
round This whirl-ing, wa - tered stone,  
(3) peak Where pil-grims long have trod  
find What hu - man thought can't frame:

Text based on John 4: 19-26.

(1) But where you live do what God  
 (2) And ev - ery place is sa - cred  
 (3) Un - lock the bolt - ed soul and  
 The source of breath and pulse and

(1) wills And find it close at  
 (2) ground Where God is loved and  
 (3) seek mind, The pres - ent, liv - ing  
 The pri - mal wind and

(1) hand.  
 (2) known.  
 (3) God.  
 (4) flame.

# SEEK NOT IN DISTANT, ANCIENT HILLS

Words: Thomas Troeger

Music: Carol Doran

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## APPENDIX R

## There's A Quiet Understanding

1. There's a qui - et un - der - stand - ing — when we're gath - ered  
 2. And we know when we're to - geth - er, — shar - ing love and

in the Spir it; — It's a prom - ise that He gives us, —  
 un - der - stand - ing, — That our broth - ers and our sis - ters —

when we gath - er in His name. There's a love we feel in Je - sus, —  
 feel the one - ness that He brings. — Thank You, thank You, thank You, Je - sus, —

there's a man - na that He feeds us, — It's a prom - ise that He gives us —  
 for the way You love and feed us, — For the man - y ways You lead us, —

1. Bb6 C7 F 2. Bb6 C7 F

When we gath - er in His name. Thank You, thank You, Lord.

## THERE'S A QUIET UNDERSTANDING

by Tedd Smith

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## APPENDIX S

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving. Psalm 95:3

**Come Into His Presence**Words and Music by  
Lynn Baird

$\text{♩} = 138$

**B♭ B♭maj7 B♭6 B♭**

Come in - to His pres - ence with thanks-giv-ing in your heart and give Him

**Cm7 F E♭ G E A B♭ B♭maj7**

praise, and give Him praise; Come in - to His pres-ence with thanks-

**B♭6 B♭ Cm7 F**

giv - ing in your heart, your voic-es raise, your voic-es raise. Give

**E♭ D7sus D7 Gm D F♯ Gm7 F**

glo - ry and hon - or and pow - er un - to

**C E Cm7(b5) B♭ Gm7 Cm7 Cm7 F F B♭**

Him Je - sus, the name a-bove all names.

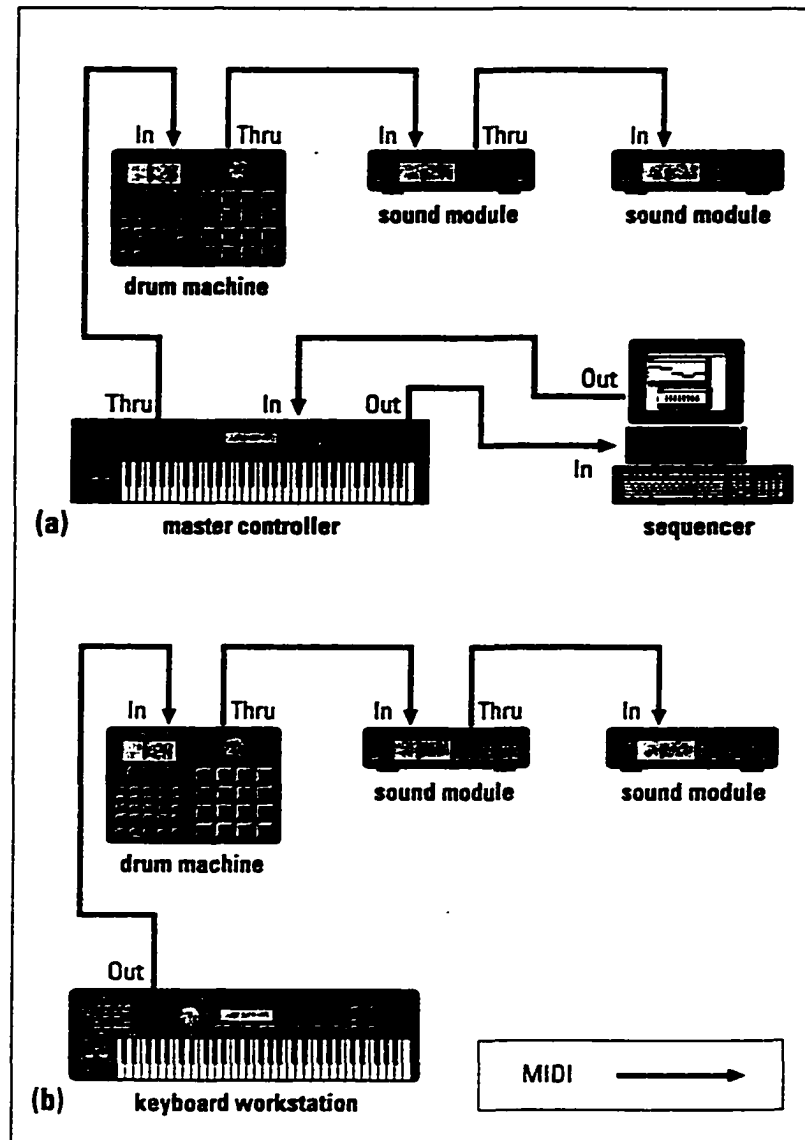
**COME INTO HIS PRESENCE**

Words: Lynn Baird

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## APPENDIX T

## Single Sequencing System



**A simple sequencing system (a) uses a daisy-chain configuration. A keyboard workstation (b) includes an internal sequencer that can record parts for external sound modules.**

## APPENDIX U

### 60 Ways of Using Hymns

#### Musical Uses

1. Play an organ prelude or recital based on hymn tunes.
2. Hymn anthems: sung by choir to introduce new hymns, or renew experience of an old one, perhaps including congregation in final stanza.
3. Hymn concertatos: use one of the many concerted arrangements published by Hope, Augsburg, Concordia, GIA, Morningstar, AMSI, and others. Can include congregation, choir, organ, instruments.
4. Hymns in alternatim: divide stanzas between women, men, choir, solo, instruments, etc. Best where stanzas are variations on a theme. Less suitable where one stanza builds on another. Avoid cultural stereotyping (men singing about rushing wind, women about dear mother earth).
5. Buildup: from solo voice, to group of singers, to whole segment of choir/congregation, to full congregation. Do this only if the poetic structure suggests or permits.
6. Descants: sopranos, sopranos and tenors, children, instruments, organ.
7. Canon: sing a hymn in canon. See Don Busarow's "All Praise To You Eternal God" (Augsburg for appropriate organ accompaniments for canons.
8. Ensembles: use instrumental ensembles (strings, brass, orchestra) for accompaniment.
9. Reharmonizations: use free accompaniments but be sure congregation knows what you are doing.
10. Drop out the pedal for an occasional stanza.
11. A capella: on a familiar hymn drop out the organ entirely. Choir must lead strongly in four parts.
12. Key change: move the key up a half or whole step occasionally (best done sparingly and in a festive hymn with several stanzas).



13. Tune combo - A: use two or more familiar tunes in a single hymn (e.g. GENEVA, HYFRYDOL, AUSTRIA in "Not Alone For Mighty Empire").
14. Tune combo - B: use original tune as foil to more familiar tune (Charles Wesley had EASTER HYMN in mind for "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing").
15. Tune combo - C: have two hymns sung responsively, e.g., "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" by congregation, and "He Whom Joyous Shepherds Praised" by choir, alternating stanzas of each hymn.
16. Faux-bourbons: reharmonized with melody line in the tenor.
17. One-liners: sing a line or couplet as response to prayer or psalm reading (as in United Methodist Hymnal Psalmody). Thrice is minimum number of repetitions to be effective.

#### **Reading and Singing**

18. As a litany: read stanzas, sing refrain.
19. In a litany: read prayer, sing stanza/refrain as repeated response.
20. Read by solo reader: as poem, creed, prayer.
21. Read by several readers: allows different voice colorations.
22. Read by choir: whole choir, different sections, solo voices.
23. Read and/or sung responsively: choir or solo voice in all/part stanza, congregation in remainder/refrain.
24. Read/sing antiphonally: by each half of the congregation. Especially effective in psalms.
25. Sing some stanzas, read others: let the hymn's structure suggest appropriate combos of solo, group, congregation. A solo reader over quiet playing of tune is powerful variant.
26. Stanzas read by solo reader, congregation sings Kyrie, Sanctus, Alleluia, Taize short item, etc., as response.

- 27. **Contexting:** introduce hymn with note on its history, theology, author.
- 28. **Focus:** before singing a hymn, ask congregation to focus on a line, couplet, or stanza, e.g., who are your "saints" when you sing "For All the Saints?" After a minute, sing the hymn.

### **Liturgical Uses**

- 29. **Bulletin - A:** print stanza(s) from today's hymn in poetic form, for meditation before or during worship (poetic form greatly aids most people's comprehension of a hymn text).
- 30. **Bulletin - B:** ask congregation to read today's hymns before worship.
- 31. **Bulletin - C:** list additional hymns on the theme of the day for devotional reading before worship, or a particular hymn for devotional during prelude.
- 32. **Processional:** choir only, or partly including congregation. Entrance, exit, around the sanctuary, around the block.
- 33. **Introit or call to worship** - one or two stanzas.
- 34. **Call to prayer:** whole or part, by choir, solo, congregation.
- 35. **Preparation for scripture:** example- "Break Thou the Bread of Life."
- 36. **Sing as scripture reading:** if a close enough paraphrase
- 37. **With scripture readings:** read a hymn's scripture sources, before, after, or interwoven with singing (e.g., "Woman In the Night," United Methodist Hymnal, No. 274).
- 38. **Response to scripture:** use hymnal index or make your own.
- 39. **Gradual between scripture readings:** tying them together.
- 40. **Sermon - A:** use a hymn-drama, e.g. "The Singing Bishop" by Hal Hopson (Choristers Guild).  
Or invent your own.
- 41. **Sermon - B:** preach on a hymn text, preferably printed poetic form in bulletin for congregation to read, or hear read.

42. Sermon - C: sing a cantata based on hymns, e.g. AUS TIEFE NOT in Mendelssohn's "In Deep Despair" (Concordia), with preacher's exposition of the psalm.
43. Sermon - D: build a sermon around a hymn. Walter Pelz's "O Worship the King" (Augsburg) could be combined with spoken exposition on Psalm 104.
44. As prayer of confession: sung or read (in varied ways).
45. As words of assurance: sung or read by congregation, solo, choir.
46. With dance or mime: following action of hymn sung by choir, congregation, or solo.
47. Visual partnership: combine slides of great paintings or of human situations and needs with seasonal and intercessory hymns. Make sure congregation is not asked to look and read at the same time.
48. Intercession: read hymn segment and ask congregation to share (in 2s and 3s) what situations and needs it suggests, then collect responses and use them as a basis for a pastoral prayer, e.g.. "In every insult, rift, and war / where color, scorn, or wealth divide (stanza 4 of "Christ Is Alive." in Methodist, Presbyterian, and other hymnals).
49. As benediction or benediction response: selected stanza(s).
50. Thematic division: sing different sections in different parts of the service. Option: repeat key stanza(s). Warning: do it for a reason; don't destroy the "argument" of a thoroughly-composed hymn.
51. Communion: have a selection of hymn-stanzas read or sung.
52. Hymn-liturgy: develop an order of worship in which hymns are read/sung for each element and movement.
53. Hymn-festival: hold a hymn festival using new and old hymns, based upon a given theme (church year, Apostles Creed, etc.). Get ideas from "Hymn Festivals," (Hymn Society, PO Box 30854, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas 76129).

### **Education and Spirituality**

54. **Use Poetic form:** most people find hymns-poems printed in poetic form less distracting (if they read music) and more comprehensible as poetry (whether they read music or not).
55. **Devotional:** suggest hymn for each week to be read at home then sung on Sunday.
56. **Experiential methods:** use couplets, lines, stanzas, images as stimulus for painting, collage, or for embroidery, calligraphy.
57. **Adult study:** discuss texts of hymns being used in worship. Use group work to pick out memorable, difficult lines, discuss theology, share different understandings and insights.
58. **Confirmation class:** read, study, and sing selection of hymns past and present, in conjunction with your preparation materials and hymnal.
59. **Home record:** make a recording of hymns to be used in the home, for children, or family worship.
60. **Memorization:** develop a hymn memorization program for children. See Mabel

Boyter's plan in chapter 13 of Hymns and Their Uses, James Sydnor, (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company).

#### **60 WAYS OF USING HYMNS. Parts I & II**

by Austin C. Lovelace

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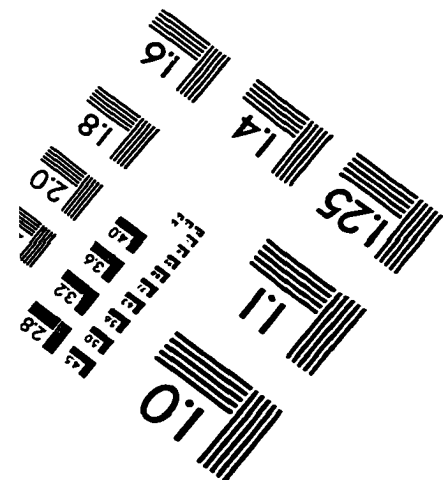
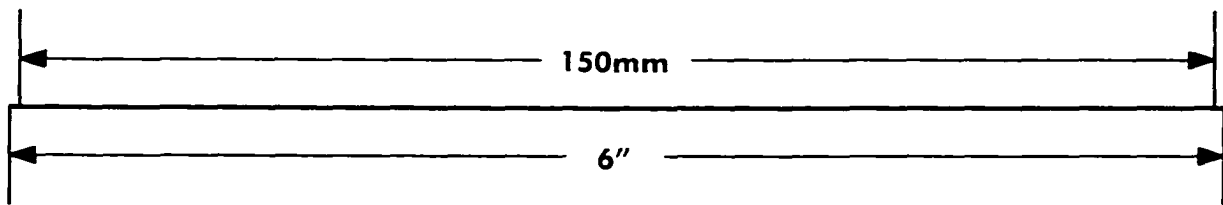
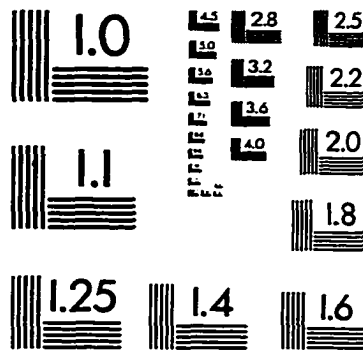
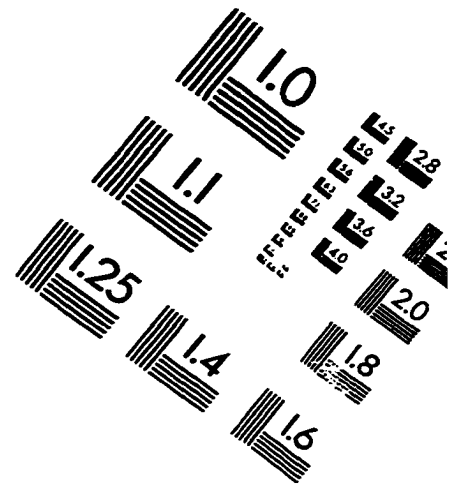
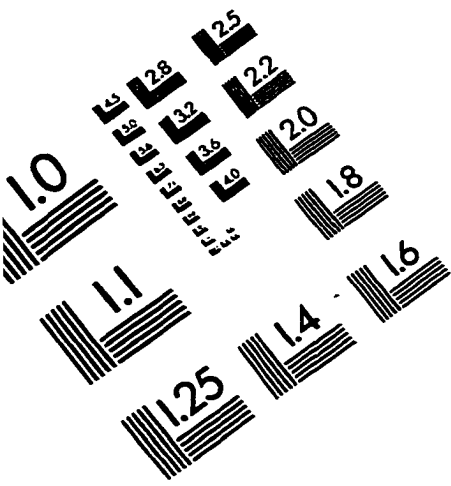
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